

HOW TO BECOME  
AN EFFICIENT  
SUNDAY-SCHOOL  
TEACHER

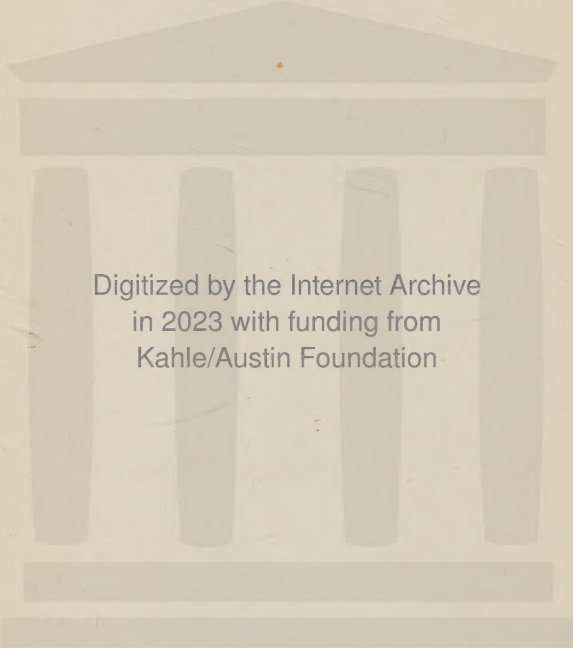
WM. A. McKEEVER



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# How to Become an Efficient Sunday School Teacher

BY

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*Professor of Child Welfare in the University of Kansas;  
author of "Training the Boy," "Training the Girl," etc.*



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PART ONE  
The Basic Principles



## I.

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

The Sunday school must come into its own and be accepted as an institution of progress and worth. The family must feel its need; the community must give it a dignified place; the state must regard it as a factor in law enforcement; society must recognize it as a necessary agency of uplift and higher life.

#### 1. The World Gone Mad

At the time of writing this text the Old World is mad with the passion of killing. Nothing in history records a more wholesale, savage slaughter among men. All this is going on without any apparent or justifiable cause, such as the ordinary neutral can discern. The so-called great institutions are accounted as nothing in the reckoning of this insane thirst for blood. Schools, churches, homes—all these time-honored and sacred institutions are reduced to kindling with the wantonness that would characterize an angry bull breaking through a fence. Science, literature, law, what are these trifles in the face of the beastly onrush for the ghoulish dismemberment of an enemy? Respect for the aged, the virtue of ordinary women, and the hunger of suffering children, are all become the objects of cruel mockery and lust and rapine.

So-called civilization does not civilize. Science? What is that but a handmaiden of a larger possible

massacre? Commerce? What price will it not pay to increase the work of the assassins? Wealth? That belongs to the state, requisitioned for the patriotic purpose of turning happy homes into charnel-houses, churches into smoking ruins and peaceful villages into cemeteries. All the real product of human endeavor for centuries past is going into the scrap-heap.

**2. God Will Not Be Mocked**     “Be ye not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” This piece of divine wisdom applies to nations as well as to men. We neutrals stand aside and behold belligerent nations praying to God for power to overcome the enemy, and in a hundred ways offering insult and mockery to their Creator. Can it be that there is something about war which temporarily deprives intelligent men of all reason and spiritual discernment? And we, not they, are in a position already to discern the grim futility of this bestial lust for carnage and power.

Civilization has lost its way, but humanity is ever coming on from the cradle and asking for a new trial. Slowly it has emerged from an age of continuous bloodshed and darkness to an era of ever-widening intervals between the bloody conflicts for material power and supremacy. Thus in his comparative moments of apostasy man suffers the chastisements natural to his ill-chosen course and learns from each succeeding failure to come a little closer to the eternal truth God has made possible as the course of his life.

### 3. What of the Sunday School?

But what does all this war sentiment have to do with the efficiency of the Sunday school and its teachers? Precisely this: the war is a ghastly reminder of the temporary failure of civilization, which is due largely to the badly balanced training given during past generations to the young of the European nations. The fundamental error has been, first, that of teaching race disparity instead of race unity; and, second, that of teaching race hatred in place of international fellowship.

Now, it will be urged during the course of this treatise that the Sunday school is peculiarly an institution for teaching race unity and universal goodwill. We shall know and understand ourselves as belonging all to the same great human family, and all as the children of the same heavenly Father, only when we shall have been led during our formative years to study carefully the great laws which he placed within our being. "The proper study of mankind is man." We have already made something of a failure to understand God by seeking to know him direct. Now, I say, let us all approach him reverently through a closer study of his highest earthly creation, *man*.

So, it is here declared dogmatically, and it will be explained at some length later, that the efficient Sunday-school teacher is the one who approaches a knowledge of God through a familiarity with the fundamental principles of the growth and development of human character; and one who seeks to promote every good and praiseworthy inherent dis-



position of his class member; and all that as an indirect means to salvation of the soul.

#### 4. Defend the School

He who would be an efficient Sunday-school teacher must no longer assume an air of apology respecting religious institutions. The Sunday school has the same right to exist as the day school or the business establishment. Society can afford to spare none of these, and to do so is to permit the individual to suffer an irremediable loss to affect his whole life.

The community which maintains a good Sunday school regularly is thereby enhanced commercially. The price of real estate is thereby relatively increased and the business of every man in that locality is improved. The community which has no Sunday school is a place of meanness and spiritual poverty. It may seem to do a thriving business for a time, as in the case of a gambling-den or other dive, but the days of that place are numbered. Social disease, spiritual death and utter brutishness will ere long disrupt such a community.

My position is stated otherwise thus: The Sunday-school opponent is, properly speaking, always on the defensive. He is enjoying the benefits of an institution which he does not care either to support or to defend, and his position is one which rightfully calls for an explanation or an apology. While we are probably not nearly ready to undertake to tax all as a means of support of the Sunday school, we should do so were it merely a matter of deciding the logical justice of the case.

### 5. A Benefit to Society

Our modern standards of training are now so high that it requires the assistance of all interested persons adequately to educate the young. The public school has been somewhat wrongly charged with being a failure. It has not really failed, but has performed reasonably well the burden of work which has been heaped upon it. It is the people themselves that have failed. They have not kept themselves in close touch with the school or even reasonably well informed as to what this institution has been trying to do. The people have failed to organize and support co-ordinating institutions, such as a well-directed scheme of home training of the young, and a well-thought-out program of discipline and direction for the community life of the boys and girls. The community must awaken to its new responsibility.

The people have likewise failed to recognize the present need of all the young, without respect to age or class, for a systematic course of training in the Sunday school, or to provide otherwise the means which pertain directly to religious education. Sunday-school workers everywhere must realize the logical force of the position stated here. As long as they continue merely to regard the Sunday school as an institution set apart for those whom it may incidentally benefit; so long as Sunday-school teachers are content to give a little light instruction of a traditional sort, and in a traditional manner, to the young who chance to come into their classes—so long will the Sunday school remain more or

less dormant and fail to realize its splendid possibilities as a child-helping agency.

#### 6. Educating One Side

As implied above, there was never a time in the history of the world when a one-sided education stood out as such a futile undertaking as it does at this present time. Compulsory education of the intellect, the head, has long been well-nigh universal. The required course of systematic training in the manual and industrial arts, education of the hand, has likewise become something of a universal practice. But the training of the heart—that is, the instruction of the young in the matters which tend to prepare them for taking their places in a world of higher spiritual purposes—this is a matter which has been woefully neglected.

Never before has this present generation been called upon to do such profound thinking as is the case to-day. What does it all mean? What is the worth of a human being? Why take any thought at all for even the crudest forms of training? What is the logical relation of the individual to the community and the state? Who should rule the people—the kings and emperors, or they themselves? Why should one render any service at all in the Sunday school, the church, the missionary field, or in the interest of the common welfare? Especially what is the use of training the young in religion and the higher things of the spirit if millions of good and so-called Christian men are to be shredded to pieces by the horrible monster called War? Far better were it to become a race of humble toilers.

Millions of people are asking themselves to-day what can be done by way of bringing up a new generation which shall despise war and find the very thought of its carnage too revolting to contemplate. Now, it is the position of this text on the Sunday school that well-managed religious training is not by any means to become a complete answer to the question last stated, but that it is to become a vital part of the whole answer. So long as we educate by piecemeal we shall have a fragmentary civilization. Nothing short of a comprehensive and thoroughly systematic course of training, such as will meet and direct all the dominant issues of life as they appear to the ever-changing, young individual—nothing short of this program will ever enable us to realize the fullness of power and supremacy of which a united human race is capable.

#### 7. A Summary Statement

The aim of this discussion thus far has been that of laying a foundation for a course of training for the Sunday-school teacher, and there is still much more to be written on this topic. But, before proceeding, let us take note of the direction in which we are going. Restated in brief terms, our contention is this: Society needs the Sunday school, and must have it in a somewhat reorganized form and as a recognized agency in the satisfactory program of the race. Society needs the Sunday school to assist in the education of the young; to give that vital part of a whole-life course of training which only a religious body can adequately furnish; to offer at that peculiar time of instinctive interest and

insight of the young individual the forms of instruction so necessary to make him a universal member of a spiritual commonwealth.

Many will rise up here and offer objections. "The Sunday school makes too many blunders," some will say. "It teaches narrowness, bigotry and superstition," others will reply. "The idea of making the Sunday school a universal affair as is now the custom with the public school is impossible," some enthusiastic Sunday-school workers will respond. To all these objections it is made reply, so is every one else blundering more or less. So are all the schools subject to the frailties of human prejudice and lack of perfect insight. So has it been said of practically every other great movement; that is, "It can never be done."

Human nature stands pat. Analyze it and you will find it just so, as presumably an all-wise Creator made it. Make careful inquiry of the ordinary human nature the world round and you will find it everywhere practically the same thing. You will find in the case of every infant a dormant intellect demanding careful education and training in order to realize its latent possibilities. You will find inherent modern energies—possibilities of manual and industrial achievement—which simply must be trained during growing years to apply themselves to the world's works; for if they are not trained, the individual so mistreated may become either a parasite upon society or a menace to human progress. You will find inherent spiritual natures with their scores of unawakened possibilities of insight



and helpful achievement. And without the education of this highest part of his nature, though brilliant in intellect and cunning in the use of his hand, a man may become a brutish beast.

Wherefore, team work is not only a most significant aspect of all child training, but the Sunday school must be thought of by all as an important unit in the co-operative movement. Religion will then receive its true place in character development and not be regarded as a mere convenience of those who happen to accept its teachings. Religion must be taught, not simply caught.

## II.

### THE PLACE OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN EDUCATION

We are now about ready to state one of our tentative theses; namely, that any sort of Sunday school is better than none at all. And it is always a comparatively safe and helpful institution; provided its teachers and managers continue during their term of service to be close students of human nature in general and of the growing characters of the young in particular. All the effort of all the schools is marked by some error. The best of teachers are constantly in the act of correcting themselves and of restating their fundamental problems. Correctness, therefore, is only a relative term in so far as human work is concerned. So, if the one who aspires to become an efficient Sunday-school teacher will acquire the practice of studying character in the making, he will thus adopt a rule which will tend to correct his errors as fast as he makes them, and to give him a developing and deepening grasp of his subject.

#### 1. When the Heart is Hungry

It is a fundamental law of instruction that the best, and practically the only fit, time for teaching a child any given subject is at that period when his youthful heart is hungry for its meaning. An attempt to teach even a good subject at the wrong period or stage of development of the child

is little better than time service. The old-fashioned school often seemed to seek to determine what the childish disposition most ardently desired and then not give it to him. The idea then prevailed that only the rigid, the stern and the burdensome sort of discipline implied any real education. The new and modern school is almost the converse of this. Happiness, joy in the performance of a given task, an instinctive interest in the duty at hand—all this implies a happy adjustment of the learner to the lesson and also the largest measure of progress in learning.

So the modern school attempts to find out just what the heart of the individual child is hungriest for, and then to give him this as the best possible representation of the bread of life. While there is perhaps one time when above all others in the course of a growing life the young learner is most eager for religious instruction and insight, there are many occasions all along the way when the juvenile interest is turned toward things which make for an informed religious nature. Now, on these many occasions it is both right and imperative that the young inquirer receive the best possible answer to his self-prompted questionings.

## 2. Human Nature the Guide

In attempting to discover the place of the Sunday school in a full course of education for the young, we find it necessary to look into the nature of the child for guidance. The serial unfoldment of the great common stock of human instincts must be considered. The general order of these seems to be the same in all tribes and classes of men, although

there are of course many minor variations. Successful religious instruction wherever given must relate itself to the age and the period of development of the learner. The efficient Sunday-school teacher must be acquainted with the general scheme of unfoldment of the growing human character and must present his details of instruction accordingly. The greatest fault existing among Sunday-school workers to-day is an inadequate knowledge of the psychology of child development.

Broadly speaking, there are about eight highly significant instincts which must be considered as involved in any serious course of training of the young. Briefly, and somewhat arbitrarily given, these are the following:

PLAY. Under this is included the impulsiveness, spontaneity and all the other more or less capricious activities of the growing child.

WORK. This is, as a class term, intended to include the instinctive disposition for the creative industry, more or less playful, of childhood; the native interest in common work; and the inherent tendency to undertake some serious constructive employment.

BELLIGERENCY. There is an unmistakable tendency of the child, especially the boy at a certain age, to quarrel and fight and to contend against almost any one who will stand as his opponent. For a time there is a fondness of contention for its own sake.

SOCIABILITY. This is another of the great, time-worn human instincts which belong to adolescence

and is now chiefly an interest in the conduct of people, especially of others of the same adolescent age.

RELIGION. During the entire course of his early life the child is more or less interested in religious matters, but at the age of about fifteen or sixteen there comes a new wave of emotional tendency in the same direction. Here is a turn in life which is most significant for training.

VOCATION. By this is meant to include the instinctive tendency to seek employment, to earn and save money and to acquire a permanent and happy life-work. Its vague beginning comes at the period of restlessness during adolescence.

HOME. There is an instinctive interest in the home life. During early years there is an inherent desire to be with one's own kin and at the paternal home. Later this takes a sharp turn in the direction of marriage and building up a new home and family.

PHILANTHROPY. This term will include roughly the instinctive disposition to help in the management of the state, to attempt to make an honest return for the benefits received from the organized community life, and to render some sort of unselfish service to the weak and suffering and needy members of the human family.

**3. Further Analysis** In order to come closer to our problems, and, if possible, to make it plain to the would-be Sunday-school teacher just what the entire task of child-training involves, let us consider more in detail the natural order of human development.

But at present we shall proceed to the extent of giving mere definitions.

Possibly before going into this matter a word of explanation is necessary. The author contends that one can not be a successful teacher in any position until he knows reasonably well the entire life of the child. It has often occurred to him, and to many other students of human welfare, that some one ought to make out a plan of religious training which would insist upon its assuming its true place in a full scheme of education. In order successfully to fill our place as teachers we must know what teachers of other schools and other grades are required by the nature of the case to do. It is a fundamental assumption of this text that the successful Sunday-school teacher, after acquainting himself with the general psychology of child development, must then proceed to apply these principles to his work in the same general way that is done in the public school. Young human nature is no-wise different on Sunday from what it is on a week-day. Its cravings, instincts, tendencies and dispositions are quite the same thing seven days in the week. In respect to these matters there is no Sabbath. Wherefore, it is a prerequisite for the Sunday-school teacher that he know much both about the Scriptures and about the child.

4. The Period of Infancy

It rarely happens that mere infants are brought into the Sunday school for instruction; however, such a thing might be done with not a little advantage, could such a matter be arranged. Mere

infants in arms can and should be taught a few simple things, and they are certainly well suited as teachers of those who would stand by and observe infant character in the making. It would be a happy situation indeed if certain adult members of the Sunday school could be prevailed upon to spend a part of the hour in the company of these innocent little ones. To know how the acts and habits of infant life are performed is to know something of the fundamentals of good teaching.

Then, there is a period of real childhood ranging from one and one-half to four years of age. The dominant guide of the little life at this time is impulsiveness. There is a strong tendency to reach for anything and everything in sight, without any definite conception of its nature or purpose. The great plan of the Creator seems to be that the child must bring his sensitive little nervous system into actual contact with as many things as possible and in as many ways as possible.

The fourth and fifth years might appropriately be called the true kindergarten age. Under natural and favorable conditions the child is now actively engaged in acquiring sense perceptions and in making use of his previously acquired knowledge. Impulsiveness has changed markedly in the direction of decisiveness. This kindergarten (or Cradle Roll) age is an important one for the Sunday school and the teacher, as will be shown later.

The dramatic instinct, or make-believe, is the next emotional interest which dominates the child. These periods necessarily overlap. We can not



state very definitely when each begins or ends. The dramatic age may be almost concurrent with that of the kindergarten. Roughly speaking, the dramatic age dominates the fifth and sixth years. Its chief characteristic is an overactive imagination. Out of simple and crude situations and materials the child mind creates more perfect and complete activities. Though crudely formed, these dreams of childhood are vivid often to the point of emotional interest, and sometimes influence conduct powerfully.

#### 5. Creative Industry

Then comes the age of creative industry, the time when the child instinctively decides to make things with his own hands. There is no happier or more important period in the life of a young human being than when he is able to lose himself in the performance of some childish task of construction. Crude materials are good enough, but he must have these in plentiful amount. And all this, as will be shown later, is related to the Sunday school.

Exploration will likely mark another dominant note of childhood. At this time the experience has advanced beyond the point of make-believe. Things as they really are entice the young learner. He ardently desires to get into things, not to destroy, but to take them apart and learn first-hand how they are made. He instinctively seeks to find out for himself whether the world of reputed fact is true or not. Later we shall show how the Sunday-school teacher may make large capital out of this period of childhood. Accompanying the tendency to explore, there is a strong interest in competition



and strife, a tendency of the young traveler upon life's journey to seek his own, to contend for his position, to claim more than his share and then quarrel, often seemingly for the mere sake of the practice.

At about nine or ten the gang spirit begins to break out in boys, and what might be called the group spirit in girls. To go with the crowd and see what they are doing, to learn of the leaders, to find out who is boss of the crowd, to learn who is ringleader of the girls' group and to acquire the rules of the gang activities—these are some of the new interests which take a most prominent place in the young at the age named, and they contribute a most significant part to the shaping of character.

**6. Social Sensi-  
tiveness**

Social sensitiveness is next, and is a very marked disposition on the part of the natural boy or girl during the year or two preceding adolescence. Some of the courage and much of the brazenness of the gang age now disappear, while a natural tendency to be backward, shy, timid or blushing takes the place. This sensitiveness may run well on into the period of adolescence.

Sociability is now ready to make its demands and dominate all the other native tendencies. This is the age of the interest in people and their conduct. Profound and most significant organic changes are the natural accompaniments of the new and emotional interest of the young of this age in the affairs of their fellows. The text will undertake to show later how to apply the Sunday school toward

the solution of the many great problems which grow out of this early age of youth.

A new and emotional desire for religion naturally breaks out of the center of the young heart sometime between the ages of fifteen and twenty. At this period all the religious instruction and practice of childhood is likely to be gone over and scrutinized introspectively by the rapidly growing individual. Many new lessons in religion will be found applicable to the age.

The vocational instinct comes next as a disposition of a higher rank. It begins in a tendency to unrest, dissatisfaction with one's personal work and achievement, and a desire for some kind of remunerative employment. The young life is prompted from within to desire to pay its own way. The later determination upon a vocation is evolved out of the reflective experiences of the young person while he is perhaps merely working to earn for the sake of saving and spending.

## **7. Marriage and Home**

The mating instinct is next. At first its behavior seems much like that of early adolescence. However, careful scrutiny will show that there has now been introduced a new element of seriousness, an ardent desire to make terms with a happy and attractive life companion. The problems of this age loom up in great dimensions for the Sunday-school teacher who is so fortunate as to have a class of young men or young women.

Home-making follows close upon the heels of the mating instinct. Not merely a life-mate, but a

companion who will share in the joys and sorrows of building up a home and rearing a family—these matters surge profoundly through the minds and passions of rightly conditioned young men and young women of the marriageable age.

#### **8. Civic or Social Interests**

Civic help comes next. Under proper conditions the young life discovers that its own care and keeping has been most seriously provided for in the organizing of the community and in the making of the state and nation. Accordingly, there comes a desire from within to be worthy and to contribute one's part in this splendid work. Civic righteousness and Sunday-school instruction are at times different terms for the same thing.

In God's own good time social service breaks out of the human heart. By slow degrees the relatively mature young man or young woman feels growing within his own nature that direct bond of sympathy which makes all the world akin. How important that the school of religion should meet this great call of nature with certain definite forms of spiritual guidance.

#### **9. New Life Here**

Then, there is the divine, inherent passion for parenthood. It has probably come to the individual in a somewhat roundabout way; indeed, he may have received the first great call from within to be a worthy parent, only when his own infant child began to tug at his heartstrings. The parents' department of the Sunday school is a new and most significant division of that institution.

**10. The Life  
Hereafter**

Now finally comes the sweet and serene instinct for immortality. Every well-organized Sunday school will have its class of the aged who are profoundly stirred with their inherent disposition to know the great facts of the world to come. It is truly an inspiration to visit the class of these fathers and mothers in Israel and listen to their discussions. It is my belief that not only the Sunday school, but society at large, should do more to provide happy and congenial occupation for the extended period during which the aged are forced to remain idle.

### III.

## THE PEDAGOGY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

All successful teaching is based upon a science either conscious or implied. It is now well understood that public-school teachers must know their pedagogy in order to be able to do their work well. In brief, the requirements for instructing in the public schools now include, first, a knowledge of the branches to be taught; and, second, familiarity with at least the elements of pedagogy. The success of the Sunday school depends upon these same prerequisites of teaching.

#### **1. Pedagogy Must Be Recognized**

The science of teaching has at last come to demand its place in the Sunday school. Teachers with training will slowly supplant those lacking it, for here the methods of instruction must necessarily be the same as they are in any other school. The same general principles apply in the teaching of the Scriptures as in the teaching of history or geography. Only the devices and the interpretations differ. Each of these subjects in its turn plays a part in the building up of a theoretically complete human character. While it is true that some of the best teachers ever known did their work without any preparation in pedagogy—persons of whom it may be said, “They have a natural aptitude”—such are scarce and are destined to be-

come fewer. And until there can be developed in this country something which will take rank as a course of Sunday-school pedagogy, Bible instructors will have to be drawn chiefly from those who have been trained for positions in the public schools.

## **2. Adaptation of Methods**

It is one of the fundamental principles of teaching that both the subject-matter and the methods of instruction must be adapted to the stage of advancement of the learner. The first general stage of development of the child is that of sense perception. All knowledge comes originally through the senses, is the general rule. Brought down to simple terms, this rule means that material objects rather than abstractions must constitute the stock of materials and devices. The Sunday school as well as any other is called upon to meet this situation by the use of incidents, activities, experiences in the child's own life. His eyes and ears and other sense organs, not the teacher's, are the instrumentalities chiefly involved.

The Sunday school has unintentionally drawn many of the young away from its possible reach on account of enforced artificial methods. We may most earnestly desire that our little ones commit to memory the Ten Commandments and other abstract texts, but unless we exercise physical force in restraining them, they will run away from us while we are trying to impart this instruction, and will seek the natural haunts of childhood. They can be shut in a room and, under pressure, be made to learn Scriptural verses which inculcate abstract

goodness and which inveigh against badness, but such methods are largely a waste of time. One may even compel these young, alert minds to memorize long algebraic formulas until they are able to rattle them off in a very entertaining, singsong fashion. Too long have the teachers of all types of schools been guilty of this sort of waste of children's time. Why not use natural methods?

### 3. The Heart and the Treasure

The old proverb, "Where the heart is, there the treasure will be found also," applies most significantly to all ages and grades in the Sunday school. "How may the teacher instruct the learner in a subject in which the latter has no natural interest?" is one of a set of examination questions in pedagogy. The correct answer is this: He can not do it at all; he can only seem to do so. What the educationist calls the doctrine of interest is under consideration here. Perhaps no one in the country has written more profoundly upon this subject than Dr. John Dewey, of Columbia University. This able author regards interest as the most persistent every-day problem of the teacher.

"The natural cravings of childhood and youth are depraving and sinful; seek to suppress them," says an ancient rule of the religious pedagogue. Find out what the heart of the young ardently yearns for; follow the young learner to his self-chosen activity; place before him those objects which will give expression to his natural interests and inclinations; use every fair means to make use of even his so-called baser appetites and desires—



all this points toward the best and most acceptable modern methods of teaching as applied to all schools alike. But this vital point of contact is often merely the beginning of the most valuable lesson. Under the watchful guidance of the trained teacher the so-called base tendency is slowly turned to an act of constructive helpfulness.

#### 4. Education from Within

Whether the child be studying the Scriptures or the rule of three, the dynamic force in learning comes from within. Here is implied the so-called law of self-activity, which has interest as its basis. Only the interested learner will apply himself persistently to the task at hand long enough to acquire useful mastery of it. How may the Sunday-school teacher so arrange the lesson of the hour that each member of the class will experience from within a natural eagerness for the subject-matter being presented? This is ever the paramount question, and we shall try to show, as this text develops, that it may be answered as successfully in the Sunday school as in the day school.

A man of middle years, who had run away from the country school and thus "finished" his formal education because he could not pass examination in the abstract requirements of the old-fashioned course in English grammar, reported as follows on his early schooling:

"No, I did not learn much in that old school; that is, from the book instruction offered. Somehow its formal lessons did not apply to me, but I remember the fights which occurred among the

boys at recess. I remember that we boys stole watermelons from a neighbor on frequent occasions, and I remember who were in the party. I remember how a half-dozen of us often made a trip during the Sunday-school hour to the home of an old farmer who always had grape wine for sale, and all about the hilarious time we boys enjoyed at his place. We went to the Sunday school only occasionally, when we expected something unusual to occur. Yes, it is true that the grape juice was more of an influence in shaping my character than the Sunday-school lesson."

The statement above epitomizes a tragic part of the life-story of legions of men. It implies bungling methods and management in the school, but nothing inherently wrong with the natural dispositions of boys and youths.

The Sunday-school teacher is facing this problem of meeting and satisfying the natural cravings of the young heart as never before in all history, because of the fact that these inner desires are being exploited and commercialized through the use of worldly attractions and entertainments. "Find out what the young instinctively crave, and sell it to them," is the motto of the nation-wide big business now dealing in the manifold forms of juvenile indulgences. So we allow as insignificant a thing as a merry-go-round or a monkey show, or a coarse street fair with its fakirs and money-grabbers, to break up the Sunday school, simply because we do not know how to use these amusements as true agencies of good character-building.

### 5. How Do Children Remember?

Teachers of religious doctrine, similarly as teachers in general, are constantly called upon to wrestle with the problem of memory. There is too commonly a procedure based upon the assumption that memory applies chiefly to the exact retention of words, rules, statistics, quotations and other such ready information. But perhaps not to exceed one-fourth part of the rightly trained memory pertains to these matters. A good memory is constituted chiefly of experienced deeds and performances, many of which have grown habitual through frequent practice.

It has been regarded rather too seriously in the Sunday school for the child to commit something to memory, word for word, or line upon line, and to recite upon this matter. But, rightly understood, a far more serious problem is to have the child receive a wholesome impression or retain some self-acquired righteous purpose. A memory of good deeds well chosen and performed, rather than of fixed words, is the more fundamental law of teaching. This is not meant for an argument against the child's learning to repeat his Scripture verses and prayers and songs, but rather an insistence that he be assigned to commit these memories in connection with acts which will give them to him in connection with most vitalizing experiences possible.

### 6. Life Is Habit

Somewhere in my former writings I have said substantially this, that a good man is not righteous in his conduct simply because he chooses to be, but chiefly

because of the fact that during his growing years his impulses, appetites, desires, and the activities which they prompted, were rightly guided and developed until they grew into a system of permanent habits. The good man is about as much a drifter as a bad man, but the one drifts in the direction toward which his early-formed good habits carry him and the bad man in the way made out by his early-formed evil habits.

Now, the Sunday-school worker may well understand the formation of desirable juvenile habits to be one of the chief aims of his effort—not that we should hold this class of teachers to be responsible for the entire set of habits which the young members of his class are in the act of acquiring. His duty here, briefly defined, is (1) to recognize the fundamental place of habit in character-building, (2) to know what set of habits the child at any given stage of growth ought naturally to be taking up, and (3) to fit the religious habits into the entire system.

How important it proves to be that all the agencies which form the character of the young should act harmoniously and co-operatively. How pathetic has been the fall of many a young person whose Sunday-school training has not been properly supported by well-ordered home training and well-guarded community life. One may count hundreds of actual instances wherein the church, the home and the school have all done their part reasonably well, but wherein the local community has indirectly inculcated vicious habits and thus broken down

personality, or has failed to give the good discipline suited to assist in this great task of human conservation. Later in this text we must try to define satisfactory community effort.

**7. Juvenile Emotions**      Again, the religious trainer of the young must make use of every occasion for observation of the laws of the emotional life. Certain events personally experienced stir up unusual and profound feelings from within the nature. Love and hatred, anger and fear, sympathy and repugnance, are some of the great human passions which begin their manifestation during childhood and youth. All of these in their turn are both natural and desirable. In general, the problem of the teacher relative to these emotions is twofold: first, to know how to stimulate them at the proper time; and, second, how to give them the forms of expression which they naturally crave.

For example, through the use of a well-chosen case, a child may be caused to feel a touch of sympathy for the sick or the hungry. But the lesson is of questionable value unless the learner be furnished an occasion for the expression of his sympathy. An emotion is rightly evaluated, not in terms of the depth of feeling, but in terms of the deed it actuates.

Furthermore, it may be said in truth that there are no base emotions. They are all heaven-born agencies, put into the general nature of all mankind. The baseness of any and all of these comes, if at all, from their wrong use or from a common ten-

dency of child-trainers to misinterpret them as factions in the making of characters.

### 8. A Summary

General pedagogy—by which we mean the fundamental principles and practices of teaching—applies just as necessarily in the Sunday school as in any other place of instruction. Pedagogy is based on the laws of psychology or the natural order of human development. During the course of the unfoldment of an ordinary life certain types of mental activity characterize the processes and suggest the point of contact and the method of teaching. Most prominent among these mental activities are sense perception, interest, memory, habit and emotion. Two other very significant ones—namely, imagination and volition—must be considered in connection with the chapter to follow.

The point which requires emphasis here is that the Sunday-school teacher is under the necessity of knowing at least the rudiments of this tried system of pedagogy in order to be able adequately to meet the demands of instruction in his classes. Just how this knowledge of pedagogy is to be acquired is not the province of this volume to advise, other than to say that almost any good school of education will meet the need.

## IV.

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

If it were possible for us to take out the entire nervous system of a human being, spread it on the table before us and look at it microscopically, we should have a sort of map of his personal experience. While it is not at all probable that science will ever enable us to read character accurately through the examination of the nervous mechanism of a deceased person, such means have already revealed the fact that mind growth and nerve development are correlated. For example, the student and the manual laborer develop radically different cranial centers during their lives.

**1. Making Brains** It is true in a sense that every individual builds up and refines his own nervous system through the instrumentality of his personal activities, during especially the formative period of his life. All are born with the same general nerve mechanism: a cerebrum with its roughly outlined centers of possible activity, and the accessory parts, numerous spinal centers, and also a loosely defined provision for specific functions. But the detailed ways in which these activities and functions are carried on during life and the peculiar manner in which the millions of cells and fibers are multiplied and associated—these are individualized in strict parallelism with



the manifold actions and thoughts of the person.

It will be remembered here that we have insisted on the Sunday-school teacher's knowing how the child grows and develops as a whole or as a unit, in order to be able to teach him religiously. The religious element of any life can not rightly be considered as a thing set apart from the sum of the practical daily experiences. So, let it be understood that we are not at this point wandering from our topic, but rather that we are doing our best to throw light on the subject, "How to Become an Efficient Sunday-school Teacher."

**2. How the Nerves Multiply** Autopsies have shown that persons of long-standing blindness—and who therefore depend largely upon the sense of touch to substitute for their loss—that these persons possess an unusually rich nerve development in the regions of the brain correlated with touch. Such methods also show that persons of congenital deafness—who, therefore, hear nothing and do not voluntarily learn to speak because of a lack of auditory models to imitate—science shows that these persons possess a relatively full cluster of nerve cells at the centers correlated with their much-used function of sight. In all these one-sided cases the unused brain centers are more or less atrophied.

So with every act of the young life—both the mental and the physical act. There is always a correlated nerve growth and differentiation. The person of well-rounded character and versatile habits possesses a well-balanced and a generally

developed nervous system. The criminal may not have been born with any peculiar shape or formation of the cranial nerves, but he most certainly possesses such a malformation as a result of training and practice to fit; and he in time becomes a victim of the uneven growth of his nerve centers. The active, professional missionary may not have been born with especially rich corticle centers for altruistic service, but we may be certain that he later possesses, as a result of experience, an unusual fullness in these cranial parts as a result of his long-fixed mode of thinking and acting.

### 3. The Idea of Plasticity

It is the generally accepted theory that during infancy and childhood the nervous system is very plastic, that it yields readily to impressiveness from the outside world, that this plasticity slowly diminishes until the period of adulthood. Plasticity in the sense used here means educatibility. The human being differs from the other members of the animal kingdom chiefly in respect to this very matter. That is, he is born with a plastic nerve mechanism which for a score of years or more continues to increase in the complexity and multiplication of its cells as an accompaniment of the learning activities. This so-called period of infancy can unquestionably be lengthened through active and varied educative processes. The child, on the other hand, which grows up in a simple inactive manner—say, a child kept at work daily doing some simple task in a sweat-shop—such a child will become “old” in his nervous condition, and therefore will miss

his opportunities of learning at a very early age. The test of mental age is the degree of plasticity of the nerves. Some people are old at twenty; others are still young at seventy.

In order best to take advantage of this readiness of the nerve structure to yield to instruction, the teacher of any rank or place will necessarily keep in mind two fundamental rules: first, to give the form of training most instinctively craved by the learner, as was emphasized above; and, second, to see that the child has the widest possible variety of training consistent with a steady growth of character and good purpose.

**4. A Time for  
All Things**

“There is a time for everything under the sun,” says the good Book—a time to sing, a time to laugh, a time to love, a time to dance. This idea most certainly applies to the problem of training the young and making use of the plasticity of the nervous system. Perhaps half of the instruction in the schools is given either too early or too late; that is, at a time when the co-ordinating nerves are not in a high degree of readiness. Children of tender years are cramped into school seats and forced to use pen and pencil at a time when they should be engaged in those coarser activities which characterize their play and which meet nature’s then insistent demands for building up the larger muscular tissues. Grown men are often seen awkwardly trying to learn to play some game which easily could have been mastered twenty years sooner. Life all around us is full of these pathetic instances.

Perhaps there is no more tragic one than that of a man struggling to bring himself into a natural and helpful religious practice long after the proper period of religious training has passed from him. And how frequently such a convert becomes a "backslider."

Again, we must come back to the rule that the time to feed a child is when he is naturally hungry, the time to give him drink is when he is thirsty, the time to give sleep and rest is when he is weary from the normal, vigorous exercise of his body. The time to give him any form of mental exercise is when his whole being seems to cry out for the practice. Children love variety and change. This inherent fondness is more than a craving for entertainment. It is nature's way of calling for those manifold forms of activity which are needed in order to lay a foundation for the possible big personality of the future.

A great variety of crude and simple plays and games are better than expertness in only one form of play. An all-round training in juvenile industry—the rudiments of all the great producing, manufacturing and distributing trades—that is far more desirable as a foundation for a big religious life than is highly specialized skill in doing some one valuable thing. The child specialist may get into the factory quicker than the other type just described and he may start with better wages, but the narrow course of training so early introduced is likely to cost him the loss of his own soul as well as the loss of all-round efficiency.

### 5. Thinking and Doing

The point which it is especially desired to emphasize here is this; namely, a wide variety of conduct on the part of the child changes the arrangement of the cell condition in the co-ordinating nerve centers and makes it possible for the young mind to expand by so much in its ability to think. If you want to think the thoughts of the race, you must go through the experiences of the race. No amount of money will buy experience. No amount of able teaching will impart one whit of experience any more than you could make known to a man blind from birth what a sunset actually looks like. You can not possibly think outside the experiences of your own life. Therefore, if you desire the learner to think with you as you describe or explain anything, see that he has the underlying experiences in form of actual sense contacts and impressions.

Sunday-school teachers often waste the precious time of the children and themselves in an attempt to give instruction in some moral or spiritual abstraction. This is one of the things which drive the young away from the school, for it is usually all as meaningless to them as fol-de-rol and fiddle-de-de. Another matter which needs to be reiterated here is that regarding the superior value of activity as against passivity in the learning processes. We try to teach children by a system of restraints and "dont's," but the method is a futile one. In order to build up the young body, to organize the nerve processes and make complex thinking possible,

aggressive experience rather than mere quiescence must be the rule. The man of big, constructive thought capacity is the man of big, courageous deeds. In his time he has floundered through trial and error, much turmoil and tempest, in arriving at his present place of poise and security.

Some deeds seem to be tied together in thought or memory; to recall one is to recall

**6. The Relation  
of Deeds**

both. This is what the psychologist once called "the association of ideas." But what we find under careful scrutiny is this; namely, that any two ideas are associated because they have been somewhere linked together in experience. Just now a good old church hymn of long ago came into my mind; and immediately I thought of the dear, departed one who taught me to sing it. The song and the singer have come to me often in one and the same conscious act and so have become fixed in the same chain of nerve connections.

So, in the good work of teaching the young a new and higher mode of action in times of trial and temptation, we give him a specific thing to do or a special word to utter or an appropriate song to sing, hoping that this will form the beginning of a good habit. To praise or to sing may be made to take the place of swearing on the part of one who is given his precise lines to utter when provoked.

The tendency in the excited life of the city is toward a decreasing use of the imagination, to take in more mental food than the mind has

**7. Use of the Im-  
agination**

time to assimilate. If the child is kept busy all his waking hours seeing things and hearing things and tasting things and feeling things, his mental growth will not go on properly. He should spend a part of the day more or less alone and in comparative quiet. Did you ever sit quietly by and listen to the seemingly absent-minded, humdrum tune a little three-year-old was singing while he toyed somewhat meaninglessly with a plaything? Then, you noted the outer evidences of the mind engaged in practicing over in imagination the experiences of the past.

There is such a thing as a constructive imagination. Its early activities might be well represented in the instance of the children sitting before the open grate and telling one another of the wonderful forms which they see in the glowing embers. It is remarkable to note the amount of entertainment and instruction which may be combined in this simple exercise. Strangely enough, we adults can not "see things" in the embers as we did in days of yore. Like the child which outgrows a form of entertainment, we, too, have had to find a substitute for this juvenile interest.

Country children as a rule have a valuable advantage over city children in the matter of the exercise of the imagination. They have many moments of enforced solitude and are thus compelled early to resort to their imagination for passing entertainment. This practice becomes a habit and is later a most valuable instrument in the making of plans and purposes for one's own daily work for his career ahead.



**8. The Habit of Reflection**

When we are at our best we live in a world of thought (things imagined) as well as in a world of things. The happy soul is the one who can take very commonplace situations and clothe them anew with his active imagination. Happier still is he who can take these images into his reflective thought and weave them into new forms such as may be used in carrying out his purposes and desires. The despair of many unhappy persons, some of them so-called Christians, comes from their fault of believing that there is only one way through a difficulty or only one way out of a deep trouble. But, instead, there are usually many, and the person of well-trained mind receives delightful entertainment from thinking of many ways whereby he can go forward and surmount obstacles.

So, the big, masterful personality is the one who, among other characteristics, possesses the happy faculty of versatility of imagination and thought. He daily experiences a sense of power from within, a power acquired through long experiences of trial and error and of gradual triumph over difficulties, a power of thought and reflection and of constructive idealism whereby he may be enabled constantly to transform the world in which he lives into a better one which it is his happy purpose to realize through his own effort.

**9. Nerves in Disorder**

It is highly important for the spiritual teacher of the child to know that morbid-mindedness or any really evil tendency on the part of the child

—and, for that matter, mere irritability—is an indication of disordered nerves. A torpid liver, sluggish bowels, twisted spinal vertebræ and many other irregularities of their class, are certain to have their counterpart in unwholesome, morbid or irrational mental process. These are matters for Sunday-school workers to take most seriously into account in their efforts to know and help direct the whole life of the child. Adenoids, enlarged tonsils, varying degrees of deafness, eye strains and nasal diseases—much or all of it hidden from the attention of the casual observer—these are very potent factors in shaping the disposition and character of many a child.

No one can deal sympathetically and helpfully with the young until he understands the relation of these irregularities of the body to the nerve functions. The complete temporal salvation of a human being and the best preparation he can have for Christian service most certainly call for putting his nerves into as nearly perfect order as possible during early life.

10. What of the Sub-conscious? Much of the thinking we do was provided for through forms of childhood experience which we can never trace. A hundred related ideas flash into the mind during an hour of reflection on some set problem. We can not keep these associated ideas back even if we try. Indeed, we do not wish to do so, for they give richness and depth to the current of our thought and they furnish a large number of forms to use in working out our thought

purposes. James calls this cluster of ideas which hovers around the central point of our thinking the "fringe."

Now, note the source of this fringe. It is made out of the manifold experiences of our past now revived for present use. And if we have had little experience of a related kind, the fringe is thin and narrow and our thoughts weak and ineffective. But if we have had many related and detailed experiences in the present field of thought, then this border of associated ideas is rich and full and we are enabled to think constructively.

So, the nervous system of the child is constantly receiving impressions through the medium of the sense organs, and storing many of them away for use in future thinking. Even at times when he is seemingly non-attentive this process seems to go on more or less feebly. Here, then, we have the basis of the so-called subconscious ideas in the manifold nerve impressions received through experience, especially during early years. They are stored there ready for use in our imaginative and constructive thinking and tend to come to our assistance when we most need them. The moral clearly indicated here is this: give the child every possible variety of experience and help him weave this all into an orderly arrangement, as a basis of thinking.

## II. What Is Will Power?

There is a very common misunderstanding abroad as to the nature and meaning of the will. A tradition has been handed down to us in substance that will is something which every one natu-

rally has from birth—some strong and some weak—and that each can call up and use this inherent power when he sees fit to do so. But a careful psychological analysis of the matter reveals only a foundation for their theory. Some children are naturally more persistent in their efforts to carry out their purposes than others.

Will power, or volition, proves to be more than a mere persistence. The ability to carry out one's purposes implies purposes to carry out, and this in turn—as explained above—implies a certain amount of experience in order to be able to think the purpose through. Moral and religious teachers everywhere are overlooking this necessary foundation in detailed experiences as a basis of definite thought and action. So, a particular man lives a good life, not so much because he determines to do so, but because he has been trained to do so. From childhood on, his experiences and acquired habits have been such as to effect a systematic organization of his nerve mechanism, and this in turn has made it possible to think the right thought before he undertook to perform the good deed.

The essence of volition is right thinking. Why is it so easy for one man to refrain from drink and so difficult for another? The answer is not necessarily found in a difference in so-called inherent will power. It is perhaps wholly a matter of radically different experience and training and, therefore, the radically different ways in which the two think in reference to the temptation. Will power is the ability to direct one's own conduct in

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the way it ought to go. The right way to help a youth successfully to meet temptation is not merely to urge him to "make up his mind" to do so and so, but to train him in correct habits of acting and thinking. The volition will then take care of itself.

In the concrete part of the text, to follow, the religious training and practice suggested will be offered in thought of a purpose to build up a good, strong Christian life, one that will naturally respond favorably to every ordinary trial and temptation.

**PART TWO**  
**The Kindergarten Age**





## V.

### THE INVENTORY OF THE CHILD

Properly speaking, the kindergarten age of the child is the period ranging from four to six years. In order to know how to teach such a young pupil the rudiments of religion, we must know what is in him at this time. So, let us adhere to our method, several times announced in the preceding chapters—our method of attempting to know the whole child in order to be better enabled to impart that form of religious instruction best suited to his present needs and conditions.

We are now approaching the concrete factor of biography, with its wealth of interest and light for growth and development.

#### 1. Uneven Advancement

Only the untrained and blundering trainer of the young of kindergarten age will regard the children as being all in the same class. The teacher possessing insight will quickly observe that there are really several general types of juvenile personality to deal with and that these types are subdivided into sharply drawn individual dispositions. Inheritance will have much to do with this unevenness. One child may have been born with a well-rounded and perfectly healthy nerve mechanism, making even growth and easy adjustment a natural course for the conduct. Another may have been

born with a very one-sided nerve refinement, making childish eccentricity a thing to be expected, and an irregular course of training a practical necessity. Still another may have been started out in life with a puny body, a depleted nerve energy—a probable antecedent of retarded progress.

Children also come to the kindergarten school reflecting a radically different childhood environment. They range all the way from the one which has had the advantage of every variety of expression of the native interests to the other one which has been cramped into a pathetically narrow and simple channel of activities. They range again between the extremes of the pampered, petulant, unrestrained child to the one whose way of life has already been carefully reduced to rule and rhythm.

There are also interesting varieties of self-consciousness among five-year-olds. While one does nearly everything in thought of his personality—for example, he knows how “properly” he is clad, how “correct” are his manners—another may go through the ordinary routine day of his life with the mind and the conduct directed wholly upon outward matters. It is well to know that these two types of children are really strangers to each other.

Now, all this variety of character in kindergarten children suggests the urgent necessity of insight on the part of the kindergartner; for she at last is to discover that she must deal with each child as an individual, though he may be trying to act with the group. When the situation is well understood, it will be seen that there is no greater

unevenness among any other grade of learners than is found in the kindergarten school.

**2. Visit the Child** It will assist us, therefore, to keep strictly in mind the fact that all the past experiences of each individual child are inwrought in his nature, thus far developed and held there as the basis of possibilities of conduct at the present time. How apparent it is, then, that house-to-house visitation will constitute one of the chief sources of instruction and preparation for the kindergarten teacher, either in the day nursery or the Sunday school. This calling at the home will not only serve as a means of assisting the individual child found therein, but it will deepen the teacher's understanding of the manifold aspects of the lives of all the little ones with which she may deal in the future.

Interest in juvenile life, wherever found, sympathy for the needs and ill conditions of the little ones and a clear vision of the ideal child hidden under the possible entanglements of the real and relatively unfashioned young personality — these traits will mark favorably the promising kindergarten worker as she goes about from home to home. In a brief phraseology, a passion to learn, a passion to live and a passion to serve will define her best attitude.

This sympathetic household visitor must go armed against shocks and surprises. She must go forward, secretly affirming her faith in the latent possibilities of good and successful achievement in all normal young humanity. Mistreatment, neglect,

indifference, nervous worry, brutal suppression, supercilious pride and gross indulgence will all come to her attention as she proceeds to take notes on parental methods of home training. So, it may be said that she should be ready for anything and shocked by nothing.

The missionary spirit, as well as the motive of learning, will, therefore, guide the visiting kindergarten teacher in her quest of the truth of childhood. Let her beware lest she overexert herself to find pitiable juvenile conditions among only the poor and the lowly, and fail to observe those so often present among the rich and the haughty.

Now, in order to assist the earnest missionary kindergartner to discover some of the great forces which shape juvenile life, and so tend to shape human destiny, let us sketch briefly the biography of a number of common children.

### 3. A Sketch of Tim

Tim was six years old when he came into the kindergarten department of a Presbyterian Sunday school in T——. His father was an Irishman who had been brought to America during infancy, and was a day laborer in a railway yard. Through a turn in affairs the family had suddenly received a small sum of money, which had been invested in the first home they had ever owned. They were "doing better" now, and the mother cleaned Tim up and started him in at the little Sunday school. There were three other children—a girl older, and two boys younger, than Tim—and they had all been accustomed to living in a small

three-room house, barren within and unattractive without.

The mother had helped the small family income by doing some extra washing, ironing and house-cleaning. The hard-working father came home for his meals and lodging, but took little interest in the children. The mother was usually tired and bedraggled, and so Tim was allowed to grow up. He and the other children fought over their belongings and quarreled not a little, till in time Tim became boss even of his sister, a year older than himself. His parents beat him off when he defeated the others, and, by the addition of much scolding and threatening, managed to keep his aggressiveness back.

Now, Tim's possessions up to date had been meager; a mud-hole during wet weather, a broken ladder, an old, dirty barrel and a few sticks and staves constituted his playthings. However, he was boss of these. Here was a young lad of unusual promise, a boy of strong native courage and daring, ready to pounce upon anything he could lay hands on and do something with it. He was inherently ninety-six per cent. efficient, but growing up in an environment that was less than twenty per cent. efficient. He knew nothing about the following child activities:

1. Making crude playthings with hammer and nails.
2. Swinging and see-sawing.
3. Playing team games.
4. Doing some regular baby-task for mother.
5. Taking care of baby brother or sister.

Now, Tim could fight, grab things and make way with them at the table and elsewhere, was seasoned to scolding and faultfinding, could dress and undress himself, would steal things to eat when they were in reach, and was eager to learn—but there was almost nothing within reach to train his childish activity. So here is an interesting question, and a baffling one: How can Tim's case be so treated in the Sunday school as to affect his moral and spiritual nature? Scripture lessons and moralizing would certainly never touch him. His background of experiences is too limited. Now, it seems that there is positively no way to treat his case effectively except to help him first to catch up with his experience. And how can even that be done until the teacher has learned the story of his little, narrow existence?

#### 4. A Sketch of Annie

Annie was five and a half, and the only child in the family. Her father was a traveling salesman, with a good income, all the support of the family. The mother spent an easy, "soft" existence. All the housework was done by servants. She went to the club and the theater often, read many current novels and magazines, and was fond of fashionable clothes. Annie had never wanted for anything. Since her childhood there had been lavished upon her the finest of clothes, the most expensive toys, an abundance of sweetmeats, and the ever-ready service of a maid.

As to experiences, then, Annie was at the other end of the line as compared with Tim. She had

been whirled about the city, and from one visiting-place to another. She stayed up late at evening, took refreshments with the grown-ups, conversed smoothly enough for a girl of ten, and had very mature ideas about her personal appearance. She was already a little "lady." However, she lacked the following:

1. Self-denial and patience.
2. A routine of daily habits.
3. Practice in putting away her things.
4. A taste for plain, wholesome food.
5. Innocence as to her dress and manner.
6. Practice in independent and initiatory play.

How would the reader like to have Annie and Tim in the same kindergarten class at the Sunday school? They often come there together. Again, I say, you must know Annie's biography and proceed to even up her experience in order to be able finally to direct her spiritual growth.

#### 5. A Sketch of Helen

Helen was a sickly child from the day of her birth, was pale, wan and listless. But she grew fairly well, and was obedient and easy to manage. She cared little for play or playthings, but preferred the company of her mother. And now, at a little more than five years of age, she was doing baby-tasks about the house with the regularity of an adult. Hers was a timid, shy, reticent disposition. What Helen needed was the following:

1. More spontaneity and play in the daily life.
2. Less rigid discipline in relation to the little tasks about the house.



3. A thorough medical examination, perhaps to be followed by a course of treatment of some kind, to put red corpuscles into her blood.

4. Some rigorous and romping games to invite the conduct of a "tomboy."

Helen is in the class also, and sits demure and ready to learn every little moral tale you place before her. But she is already almost too moral. What will you do with her?

**6. A Sketch of  
Raymond**

Raymond is a big, plump, red-faced, rollicking six-year-old. Noise, laughter, and rough-and-tumble conduct are his working capital. He has already climbed over the roof, has let himself down with a rope from the upper window. He ties up the dog, sits on the cat, goes close to the horse's heels, ploughs through the mud and water, and teases every child that will permit of his pranks. Everything is funny to Raymond. From the time he could creep, his life has been almost 100 per cent. spontaneous combustion and hilarious disorder. Every one enjoys his broad grin, and all indulge him in his happy, harum-scarum ways. What he needs is—

1. Some childish task to do every day.
2. To acquire the habit of obedience.
3. To be assisted in finishing more of the play-houses and other structures which he kicks to pieces too soon.
4. To learn to wait on his mother occasionally, and to lead his baby sister past a few dangerous places.

### 7. The Dramatic Interest

Now, as different as one can imagine, in respect to their personal experiences, these four children, and the others in the kindergarten class, are alike in one respect. That is, they are in the dramatic age, and are instinctively fond of anything that will stretch or extend the conduct of nature, and everything they touch is thought of as having more or less mind or purpose.

This kindergarten period is the age of Santa Claus. This beneficent being should be taught to the child as a reality. Some religious teachers, with a motive of instructing the young in a spirit of genuine frankness and honesty, try to keep the beautiful Santa Claus story away from children. It can not be done except in a literal way. The little ones simply will have their make-believe and drama. You may take away dear old Santa, but you can not prevent the child robbed of this beautiful myth from carrying on a familiar and affectionate conversation with dolls, sticks, horses, calico cats and gingerbread dogs. Nearly everything the child of this age deals with—the age of animism—is not only alive, but it behaves with reference to him.

What we should especially like to urge, therefore, is that very probably the nearest way to the heart of the child—the nearest approach to his religious interest—is through the devices and instruments mentioned above. Every Sunday school should have a kindergarten department, with the best available kindergartner in charge. If no such

teacher can be secured, then the most willing volunteer may take up the work. By appealing to the experts and to those who furnish the materials for the kindergarten school, she may obtain most valuable suggestions and aids. Since there is practically no way to teach the little child effectively other than by the use of material things, even the poorest Sunday school can afford to fit up a small corner for work and play. This will be shown below.

## VI.

### THE PERSONALITY OF THE TEACHER

The task of caring for little children in any place or capacity is so nearly a sacred calling that it seems to demand an individual of rather unusual personality. In describing the character of the satisfactory Sunday-school kindergartner, we do not wish to be understood as placing the standards unnecessarily high. We are convinced that those given below can be attained to by an ordinary young woman who may feel the true call to the high office of leading the little ones. Note, therefore, the ten prime virtues which might well characterize such a person.

#### I. A Radiant Daily Life

It has been rightly said that the person who is in love with his work has already taken the first direct step toward a radiant every-day life. If, in addition, he enjoys the advantage of a full preparation to do a worthy work and also receives a call to take it up, then his cup of joy in daily existence is very full indeed. The face of the Christian worker ought to shine with a light reflecting the heavenly spirit from within. The peace and praise, the sense of inner worth, the satisfaction of good already accomplished, the anticipation of more to follow, the losing of the self in the enthusiasm attending the effort—all these mark in a

significant way the radiant personality, wherever found. How becomingly such a spiritual garb rests upon the shoulders of the well-equipped Sunday-school kindergartner.

The radiance which we are thinking of as a mark of the one called to teach the little ones in the church is perhaps partly a matter of inherent temperament, but it is also largely a superb acquisition. Temperance in eating and drinking, regularity in the attention to nature's many demands, and a sort of rhythm in the entire physical being, are all contributory to a fine spiritual self-improvement. Add to these qualities good cheer and habitual optimism, and you have the beginnings of a Christian personality that will naturally draw the child and inspire him to perform good deeds.

## 2. Love for Children

Every great performer in any praiseworthy field of endeavor is likewise a great lover. The true Christian should love his earthly life, but always in a spirit of reverence and humility. No kindergartner is really called to teach until she has learned to love humanity in general and the little child in particular. "A little child shall lead them" is an inspired text for all those who would successfully impart religious instruction to the young.

But how can one love an object without first knowing it, and how can he know it without first having studied it? So we are brought back to a duty urged upon Sunday-school teachers of any and all grades, and one which will bear reannouncement here; that is, to study the young systematic-

ally, through both the use of books on child psychology and the living specimens themselves. Such a practice is the only sure means of approaching the task of religious teachership and holding the appointment with credit.

The love of little children is so interwoven with sympathy as to their needs and general conditions. We see the mark of pain and suffering upon the face of one child, the pinch of hunger and chill upon another, the blight of indulgence and pampering upon a third, the hand of failure and disappointment upon a fourth, and so on. And when we realize that all these menaces and burdens are heaped upon their weak shoulders through no real fault of their own, our hearts are touched in love and pity, and we are ready to offer our aid.

It is not merely an empty practice for one to go about his daily routine of duties expressing more or less secretly, but in thought-out sentences, his love for the little ones as they pass. Words of cheer and endearment, little acts of helpfulness and encouragement, and the secret thought of a blessing for the child life—these are the subtle acts which practice will make contributory to a character of childlike love and radiance.

### 3. A Passion Player

The able worker in the vineyard of young humanity must learn to emulate, in a way, the make-believe conduct of his trustful little disciples. To the child "all the world's a stage," and all the things in it are players. Raised to the level of sentient beings, even sticks and stones respond to

the imagination. So with the faithful leader of the little flock. I would have her learn to dramatize her life. Stress and serenity, restlessness and quiet, pain and ecstasy, depression and exultation, and other such alternatives, must sway her being like the storm and calm of the mighty ocean.

Many near-tragedies and countless real comedies occur daily in the lives of the young animals. They do so many strange and unexpected things. The tasks we set for them are done in such surprising ways. Their unfolding characters take on so many mysterious forms. The ideals we hold up for them are so frequently crushed, only to arise again in new and strange forms. All this stirring movement of interest and change in growing childhood makes us welfare workers feel that we are players upon a mighty stage, and, in a sense, dramatizers of the great truth of God. And it is well it were so, for we thus find greater pleasure in the fulfillment of our appointed task as leaders and spiritual directors of the young and our reward is sure.

#### **4. A Rare Insight**

Very many Christian people fall into the habit of regarding the daily world in which they live as one of dull routine and grind. They fail to catch sight of the subtle and significant fact of change. Yet, one might truthfully say upon waking to the duties of each morning: "Behold, all things are become new. The thousands of agencies, large and small, which make up the character of the day are arranged as never before. I, too, must be a new creature, alert as to the best order for my day's endeavor, watch-



ful in regard to the new opportunities which may come to me, expectant as to the new scenes and situations into which I may be brought, hopeful of a new enduement of power from on high."

Now, if we begin each ordinary day of the year with our minds open to perceive a new world and our hearts open to admit a new evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the child with whom we may chance to deal will also appear as one undergoing profound changes. This point of view is a most important one for the Sunday-school teacher. For, if you will inquire into the mind and motive of many Christians, relative to the young, you will find them obsessed in a belief that is both pessimistic and fatalistic. This boy is so and so, that girl is such and such, they will contend; and you can do little or nothing with them. Some day we may learn not to be discouraged at a so-called bad case, but to think of it all as a problem of helping the wayward one to realize a better self.

But the Christian teacher of true insight knows better than all this. The kindergartner, especially, is very optimistic about the so-called bad children which may be sent to her; and that because of her deep insight into their latent possibilities of child growth and development. Where one points to a weakness in a child, she points to a beginning of strength. Where another sees deviltry, she sees juvenile spirituality. Where still another beholds mere stupidity, she explains the law of improvement through the released and directed self-activity of the little one.

**5. The Element  
of Motherliness**

There is coming to be recognized in this country a new and significant type of motherhood. It is the spiritual type. This valuable personality is not confined to the women who are physical mothers, merely to those who give birth and nourishment to the young. It is illustrated in the case of every woman who is naturally fond of little children, and who seeks a way whereby to minister unto their needs. Thousands of these spiritual mothers are not even married. Other thousands are married, but have no children of their own in the physical sense of the term. But in the spirit world and in the realm of the soul of the young, these are often the real motherly natures. I confess that it would be a great gain for the race if their own blood and temperament could be contributed to the oncoming generation through the natural channels of physical motherhood. That will be a great day for human happiness and well-being when it may be said in truth that no children are born into the world except those which are first conceived in parental love and desire.

But, in the selection of a kindergartner for the Sunday school, there are certain indications of a genuine motherly nature which may guide us. An "old and experienced teacher" is not necessarily the right one to teach our babies. Occasionally we find such a teacher who is so rigid and stern in her classroom habits that no little child would be benefited by contact with her. Then, again, we may know of some mere girl member of the church

who is so radiant in the presence of the young that every little one clings fondly to her person. This is the most reliable indication of inherent worth in the teacher. Give the children an opportunity, say, on the open playground; observe there the one whom they most naturally run to meet with innocent love and laughter, and elect her the teacher, no matter whether she be sixteen or sixty. Her devotion to the cause of the children will be a guarantee of her faithfulness to the office, should she receive it. Give her the call.

#### 6. A Course of Preparation

The kindergartner in the Sunday school must acquire the largest possible vision of her work.

In order to do this, she will find it most helpful to take at least some sort of home course in preparation. As a first step toward this preparation, she is advised to correspond with the department of education in a college or university and ask advice about a home-reading course in the psychology of child development and training. She may also write to the University of Chicago, or Columbia University, New York, for a list of standard books and magazines on her new specialty. Half a dozen books and magazines will constitute an excellent beginning of a library for her department. These should be paid for out of the funds available for general supplies, and should remain the property of the school.

The kindergartner who is instinctively in love with her work will find this suggested course of home reading a most charming pastime. The sim-

plest text in child psychology will constitute the first course. This may be followed by books on the special applications of psychology to kindergarten instruction. It is fair to expect that the one who follows this prescribed home course will be well rewarded in more ways than one: in the added pleasure to her Sunday-school work, the enlarged insight into the growth of human character, and in valuable preparation for a possible appointment as teacher in the public schools.

The point which we might well emphasize here is the highly specialized nature of the kindergarten work of the Sunday school. Hence the necessity for expertness on the part of the teacher. And no school is so poor and humble but that it may make the provisions suggested above.

**7. Inspiration from the Bible**      It is needless to urge that the kindergartner can not hope to make her personality all that it needs to be without becoming acquainted with that subtle, transforming force which comes from a faithful searching of the Scriptures. The passages which refer to childhood and to the sacred offices of caring for and training children are especially to be commended; and those selected verses which convey a peculiar message to the heart of the believer are next to be sought.

To what was said above about dramatizing one's life, this further point may now be added; namely, seek to acquire the habit of being inspired. The Christian has a right to feel that he is divinely called to his daily work as well as his Sunday

work. Perhaps this call will come in the form of a daily testimony of inner peace and satisfaction. Perhaps it will come as a thrill of delight in thought of the work when it is about to be undertaken. In any case, this divine leadership will be made more clear and definite if one has acquired the practice of running over mentally some treasured Scriptural verses and chapters. Inquiry has shown that many Christians do this, but they choose a wide variety of selections for the purpose. Each one seems ready to cite a verse, or longer passage, which conveys a sweet spiritual message to his soul and which thus tends to give the force of inspiration to his daiyy life. Thus we grow in grace.

#### **8. A Public Installation**

In order further to imbue the kindergarten teacher with the sacredness of her office—and, for that matter, all the other teachers and officers might well have such a beginning—it is urgently suggested that there be held for her appropriate installation services. Rightly managed, this impressive ceremony should do much to quicken the thoughts and recognize the purposes of all concerning the spiritual care of the little ones. Let each one who takes part in this program prepare beforehand to render a beautiful and effective part. The minister may set forth a brief pronouncement as to the sacredness of the calling of child trainer; the superintendent may read a solemn, well-worded pledge of the faithful co-operation of the other departments of the school with that of the children; some mother may give a promise of the prayerful support

which the new officer is to expect from those of her class; and the kindergartner may respond to all these with a vow of fidelity to her new responsibility.

This service, mingled with appropriate songs and prayers, should make a deep impression on all those present, and should be a means of sending the newly chosen teacher to her work feeling that she is one of the Lord's anointed.

#### 9. The Eternal Goodness

Finally, as an aspect of the personality of any and all who may receive the true call to teach in the Sunday school, there is commended the superb habit of expecting the eternal law of goodness and righteousness to prevail slowly over the rule of baser things. Disease, pestilence and famine may decimate the population, the cruel sword of battle may dismember tens of thousands. But are we not constantly finding out that ignorance, weakness and depravity, brought upon man by his own neglect of God's laws and teachings, are at fault, and not the Creator himself? And are we not constantly being reminded by the power of Divinity himself that out of all this turmoil and world-tragedy there tends to force its way a higher order of life and practice?

The purpose here is not to appear fatalistic—far from that—but to remind the reader that the order of Heaven is evolution and higher life and progress. God will have his own. His purpose will have its way, and if man does not see fit to become a peaceful and inspired instrument in

working out the divine law of the universe, then the great Lawgiver will offer him an opportunity to solve the problems of his existence through the misery and suffering brought on by his own foolish and sinful acts.

But the call to duty, which we described above for the kindergartner, seems to imply that each and every one must regard himself as divinely appointed to contribute courageously his little part toward the realization of the kingdom of heaven here on this earthly domain. Is not indifference to the inner call to Christian duty, and the inaction which must necessarily follow, one of the most grievous of sins which the child of the living God may commit?



## VII.

### THE WORKING MATERIALS

Now, while it is perhaps ideal to have a fully equipped kindergarten and expert teachers of the same in the ordinary Sunday school, the absence of both will not necessarily discourage the officers. Suggestions were given above for making inquiry of the established institutions. Regarding the standard types of equipment, reference should also have been made to the Montessori system, now becoming well known. This system is a most suggestive and helpful adaptation of the methods and materials of the older system as originated by Froebel and others. Madam Montessori and her school have brought out a considerable amount of new equipment which is well suited to the all-around sense-training of the children. The valuable sense of touch is especially made use of by these materials. However, they are rather expensive and not absolutely essential to the success of the children's department of any Sunday school.

**1. Home-made Apparatus** Any ordinary Sunday school can afford to supply the kindergarten department with the necessary simple means of giving instruction therein. The expense in money will be little or nothing. Some constructive thinking and planning, and an amount of resourcefulness in gathering home-made materials, will suffice for this purpose. In general,

the little school will be much assisted in its work through the use of the following:

1. A plain, low work-table.
2. A box of clean sand.
3. Scissors, pasté and brush.
4. Some cardboard boxes.
5. Numerous pictures to cut out.
6. A few cheap dolls.
7. A supply of light, thin wood material.
8. Hammer, small nails and tacks.
9. A box of colored crayon.
10. Spools, cord and other such materials.

The kindergarten teacher should not exercise undue haste in the gathering of these materials. If practicable, it will be very entertaining and instructive to the children if the entire class can be present, and assist their leader in the task of selecting the necessary equipment and in the more important task of putting it into place.

Throughout this entire text we must keep in mind the psychology of learning. When the children are invited to recite their lessons in a beautiful room fully equipped with all the essentials of work, they are not so likely to appreciate what they have or to know well how to make use of it. On the other hand, it would be far better to lead the little ones into the bare room, to show them about and make them conscious of its comparative crudeness. At this point, the teacher should pause to give them something of a vision of what is to follow. She may say to them substantially this: "Now, boys

and girls, you see this bare room and how untidy it is. But we are going to have our little school in here, and therefore we must arrange this room for our work. When it is cleaned up all nice, we shall bring our little table and chairs, our sand-box and dollies and many other beautiful things to work with and play with. I want you to go with me and help gather some of these things, and then we shall come back here and place them where they belong, and put this little house of ours in order. Here we shall have a happy time all together." What we are thinking of here especially is the possibility of making the children feel that the Sunday school and its equipment belong to them, and the way to accomplish that purpose is to begin early. Too many of the larger ones feel as if they were impressed into the Sunday-school work, and they are therefore more or less unconscious of the best purpose of the school, and are also difficult to manage. So, if the kindergarten teacher can arrange to have the children co-operate with her in the securing of the materials and in the arrangement of their little work-room, such will constitute a step in the direction of an improved attitude toward the work of a school and toward its more remote aim of training the young in morals and religion.

### 3. The Table and Chairs

Kindergarten chairs are comparatively inexpensive, and can be obtained through almost any furniture dealer, or they may be ordered directly from one of the large supply houses. In case, however, it is not convenient to obtain the chairs in

this way, a long bench will serve the purpose very well. This bench may be made about six feet in length by using an ordinary plain board about ten inches wide for the seat. It should be the same height as the ordinary chair. Assume that this bench will accommodate four or five children at a time.

The table may likewise be a home-made affair. Six feet is a convenient length, but it may be as long as ten feet. The top may consist of two smooth boards, twelve inches wide, and the legs may be made of ordinary two-by-four material. Considerable care should be exercised as to the height of the table, allowing for room for the little knees to go under and for the little elbows to rest freely on the top during the performance of the work. It will require practically no skill in the line of carpentry to make the table and benches suggested. Indeed, it would be a delightful exercise for the teacher and the children to nail these together themselves after the parts have been carefully cut out by a carpenter. The children will take special pleasure in sandpapering the top of the table, thus making it more servicable for their needs. And be assured, it is a delight to look in upon such a busy scene.

**4. The Sand-box** A box of sand is a most valuable piece of apparatus for any school or other place where little children work and play. It is certainly helpful in the shaping of those fundamental childish actions and dispositions which prepare the way for religious instruction.

An ideal sand-box for the kindergarten room may have the following dimensions: two feet wide, four feet long and eight inches in depth. Secure for this a quantity of clean sand of a comparatively light color. Place the box in a corner where it will be as much out of the way as possible, since it will be rather too heavy to move about. In addition to the sand, secure a few smooth blocks by cutting small-dimensioned lumber into lengths of three inches and six inches. Also, place a few cups, sand-diggers and other forms in the box.

**5. Carpenter Tools**      It will be an easy matter to obtain a few implements for working in wood, such as a

small hammer, a light key-hole saw, a tri-square, a foot-rule and a supply of tiny nails, screws and tacks. The teacher will find not a little pleasure in leading the class in the use of these materials, and, as will be shown later, these things may be made contributory to the character-building and likewise to the spiritual development of the young.

**6. Picture Materials**      The next in order will be some materials for cutting and pasting. A pair of ordinary scissors, a bottle of library paste and a liberal supply of forms and pictures to cut out, will be necessary. The task of gathering the pictures will prove to be the most difficult one here. Besides making use of all available old magazines and other printed materials of that class, the teacher may write to the various publishers of school mag-

azines and kindergarten literature for the materials needed in this work. The superintendents of the local schools will give helpful advice in regard to the matter. What we especially wish to urge is that there be obtained a liberal supply of pictures of ordinary animals and of the many objects familiar to the child life. Later we shall try to show how these may be used in the training processes.

#### **7. Drawing Materials**

Children of the kindergarten age are not especially fond of drawing, as the intensive effort required proves to be an overtax upon their crudely developed nervous systems. The thoughtful teacher will require them to undertake to draw only very simple outlines, and such as can be done in a quick and dashing manner. But they will be pleased and entertained by the drawing done by the teacher in the course of the lesson processes. So there should be obtained a small blackboard (one made of ordinary cloth will suffice). In addition, there should be an ample supply of colored crayon. If the teacher is sufficiently prepared to do so, she may make use of the large sheets of drawing-paper and construct before the class the pictures needed in the work or intended for the decoration of their room. Special talent is not necessary.

#### **8. The Doll Equipment**

Practically all children, even little boys of the kindergarten age, are fond of dolls. They think of them as living persons. Therefore, the doll equipment for the Sunday-school kindergarten is an entertainment feature. Here, again, the

necessary expense will be meager. The undressed doll forms may be obtained at a trifling cost, or even rag dolls will suffice, provided one has the skill sufficient to pencil the features. Crepe paper of various colors will prove to be satisfactory material for making doll-clothes, while cardboard materials will suffice for the making of the doll furniture and the parts of the tiny houses.

**9. Other Accessories**

Of course, the resourceful teachers will accumulate a large quantity of those simple materials which children pick up about an ordinary house and use in their play; such as spools, cords, pieces of broom-wire and various fragments of things which may be used in constructing the play apparatus. For the purpose of taking care of these odds and ends, there should be made a separate box. Each child may be asked to make this box a depository for the small articles incidentally brought to the playroom by the class members.

**10. A Real Kindergarten**

It is an assumption of the author that the trained kindergarten teacher will need little or nothing of the suggestion given above. She has been through the schools and is acquainted with the equipment and the standard methods of arrangement of the apparatus in the room, so it is not thought necessary in this connection to go over the details of the ordinary stock materials which any kindergarten house will be ready to supply, or to offer any detailed advice as to the arrangement of the room. She will naturally know more about



that than any ordinary layman. What we wish to do in this chapter is to render a service to that larger number of teachers who have the spirit of the kindergartner, without her expert training. Especially do we wish to serve those many schools which are short of funds and do not see their way clear to purchase the expensive standard materials and constructions. We wish to insist that the Sunday-school kindergarten equipped in this homely and inexpensive manner may serve all the fundamental purposes necessary for leading the children forward toward a better type of life and action.

## VIII.

### THE LESSON PROCESSES

The reader will remember that the kindergarten in the Sunday school must be conducted in practically the same manner as if it were in the ordinary course of the public schools. There is one distinctive feature, however. The Sunday school must interpret the activities of the children in terms of their religious or spiritual values. Little children are incapable of understanding abstract teachings. They may sit and stare at you under such instructions, but they necessarily fail to grasp the thought. The best that we can hope for by way of teaching them any subject is to give them material things to work with, and then to endeavor always to interpret these processes in such a way as to leave in their minds at least the improved attitude toward their own possible volitional acts.

1. Using the Ma-  
                  terials

So the problem of making the children's work in the Sunday school effective is one of furnishing them an adequate variety of simple, childish things to do as stated above. This understanding is comparatively simple, provided we once get the point of view of a sound method of instructing the child's mind. It will be helpful at all times for the teacher to consider the environment and the interests of the members of her little class. What have

they experienced thus far in their baby lives? With whom have they been associated? What animals have they taken notice of or played with? In general, what particular persons, things and acts have these several children been made definitely conscious of in the course of their childish experiences from day to day? If we can once inquire into the conscious thought and purpose of these little ones, and see the world of passing events as they understand it, we shall then be in a suitable position for instructing them and for guiding them tediously forward toward the spiritual truths of life.

## **2. Arranging the Apparatus**

Movement is a fundamental fact in the life of any child. He may go in and out, passing many times by stationary objects and not become conscious of them, but when these things are examined and talked about in his presence and under his attention, they at once take on full and more or less complex meaning. For example, a new piano was brought in a house where there lived a four-year-old girl. The placing of the instrument, the critical examination of it and the discussion of its various parts, all under the conscious attention of the little one, made this piano a very definite part of her thought. Now, in the same house there was at the time of her birth a china-closet of unusual attractiveness. To her this other object had remained a practically meaningless thing. It had never been brought in and thus given her any sudden shock of surprise. It had never been examined or talked about in her conscious presence.

Now, we have at least learned of the possible lesson to be derived through the conscious presence of all the members of the kindergarten class while the furniture of their little room is being put into place. The knowing instructor will move things back and forth about the room, slowly adjusting them to their position and talking all the while in the language of childhood about their meanings. The table, chairs, sand-box and smaller articles will be both talked to and talked about in a somewhat affectionate tone of voice. Every little one will learn to know these things and will begin to appreciate them as his own. Each in his turn may be asked to assist in arranging the room, even though the part performed be only a trifling one.

After this rearranging of the furniture of the room has been properly undertaken, it may be assumed that the children arriving at the place thereafter will come with a feeling of respect and something of a sense of ownership. To each little child it will not be, "That room where the children go," but rather, "In our little kindergarten room."

### 3. Make-believe People

It will be well to begin the first lessons in our little new school with some form of representation of the conduct of people familiar to the minds of the child members. The art and resourcefulness of the teacher will at once be drawn upon to represent a situation familiar to all the little ones. Take, for illustration, a dining-room scene, represented by means of pictures and forms cut out of paper or cardboard. In either case, the teacher

will proceed about as follows: make a representation of the dining-room and the table with the dinner served or being served. Represent the members of the family, the father and mother and the children, each and all performing their characteristic parts. While the pictures or cuttings are being made, the teacher will continue to talk familiarly about the small details of the dinner hour. She will make reference to the small courtesies that would be expected of each member of the family and aim to conclude the lesson by making the point of gratitude and reverence in the minds of the children. She can explain how the child will act becomingly at the table and even develop the idea that somebody had to work and sacrifice in order to bring on the meal. By means of carefully chosen expressions, she will lead on to the point that the heavenly Father has contributed to it all, and that he thus blesses all those who perform their several duties well and in thought of his beneficence.

**4. The Concrete Method** We have now given a hint of a general method to be applied in the Sunday-school kindergarten. All things must be acted out; the details of each childish story must be lived in the experiences of the little ones. In every possible way there must be brought in an active participation in the games, plays and construction work. In cases where their hands are not sufficiently trained to participate, then they must be made to follow each movement of the teacher as she goes slowly through the processes. There need be no set form or fixed program

for the work; often an incident will furnish the means of an excellent lesson.

For example: a thoughtful kindergarten teacher was about to begin the hour's duties, when she glanced at the window and noticed that a honey-bee was attempting to escape from the roof. She carefully secured this interesting creature in a small pasteboard box and placed a piece of clear glass over the top of the box. The children all watched her eagerly, many of them offering suggestions. Of course, the little boys especially were ready to advise that the insect prisoner be killed. One or two, remembering painful experiences in dealing with honey-bees, were afraid of being stung, but the teacher had her own purpose. She placed the box on the table, called the little ones about it in a circle, and they all examined the insect critically. She spoke of the anatomy of the bee and made that feature of the lesson a matter of interest and wonder to the children. Then she made the point that God made many wonderful creatures to live in the world and gave them all something to do. Many of them were useful, and entitled to our protection. She made the point that the honey-bee works for us; that he will not sting if you let him alone; that he is a smart insect and knows how to go about and gather honey from the flowers and take it to his hive; that he gathers much more than he and his mates may need to eat and lays it by for the winter season, when they can not find food. She explained the plan of the hive and the method of securing the honey, making it clear to the little

ones that enough is left to supply the creatures. Out of this lesson was brought an intimate consciousness on the part of the children of how one useful insect lives and performs his life-work. And finally there was drawn from the children at least a small measure of reverence for the great plan out of which the world of living things was created.

**5. A Lesson in  
the Sand-box**

The well-trained kindergarten teacher will find many a baby sermon in an ordinary box of sand. On one occasion, perhaps, she will smooth off the sand-box and then say, "Now, boys and girls, let us make a town. What does a town have in it?" The children will give a variety of replies. They will mention houses, people, railway trains, and so on. So, under their suggestions, the teacher will place the tiny paper houses in rows facing streets made in the sand. They will lay out a railway and a station and will place on the track the image of a train coming in. Let us suppose that she is about to tell the story of some one coming to visit in the homes of the little ones. It may be a long-absent brother, sister or grandparent, as the situation may seem to warrant. She will elicit from the children various remarks as to how they should behave when such company arrives, and derive from them not a little sentiment as to how to treat a guest in the house. She may make the point that we wish our guests to be happy at our house, so that they may go away glad and thankful that they came. They will then think well of us while absent and consider in their minds as to how they may thus



be hospitable in turn, either to us or to some one else who may call at their homes.

Thus it will be easy to teach a lesson in hospitality and good behavior in the treatment of the stranger in the house. If she feels called upon to do so, the teacher may introduce the character of Christ here. She may explain to the children the fact that he never saw a railway train, that he nearly always walked as he journeyed about the country, that the people were always glad to welcome him into their houses, that they never charged him anything, but that they felt more than paid because of his kindness and sweetness of disposition while at the home of a stranger. It should at least be easily possible to develop in the thought of the little ones a new attitude of respect and reverence for the stranger within our gates.

**6. Back to Nature**      There is always an opportunity to teach children something about the growing plants and to make a spiritual deduction from the lesson. So, by careful provision, the teacher will bring a number of seeds to the classroom and will plant these, or have the children do so, in a small box of sand. By questioning, she will have them consciously direct all this undertaking. The bringing of the seeds into contact with the soil, the furnishing of the water, the need of warm air and direct sunlight, will all be discussed during the procedure and always in such phrases as the little ones can understand.

By design, the germ should be removed from a few of the selected seeds, so that they will lie

dormant, or decaying, while the other seeds are seen to sprout and begin to grow. Then, at the proper time, the eager little eyes may be allowed to peep into the box where the sand soil has been removed and the germinating plants as a whole may be presented to their view. This lesson about the plants may be carried out at almost any length, but only the simple facts should be produced, such as the actual planting of the seed, the presence of the essential elements of light, heat and moisture, the springing up of a new form, and the decay of the old hull. The children may be made to inquire what makes the plants grow. Of course, this will be the teacher's opportunity to state in a simple and dogmatic way that God is constantly at work everywhere, causing things to grow and creating the world anew.

**7. A Division of  
Labor**

The teacher will soon discover that the members of her baby class are very uneven in their abilities. But she will not permit certain forward ones to do all the work and thus have an extreme advantage in learning. She will seek to discover the potential abilities in the more reticent children and to bring these into action. Such discernment on her part will call for a thoughtful division of labor among the several members of her class. Some will be apt at working in sand, others in the cutting out of forms, still others in leading in the games and plays. Then, there will be a few who seem to manifest little ability of any character. But the teacher must understand that she simply has failed to do her part in discovering the best apti-

tudes of such children and she must try the harder to unravel their hidden natures. Patient inquiry will enable her finally to discover the quiescent little life within. So, let the motto of her school be, "Something for every one to do."

**8. Back to Nature**      God's great out of doors is literally filled with creatures which speak to the understanding mind of his power and beneficence. The Sunday-school kindergarten teacher should make much of this situation during the warm months. It may be convenient for her to conduct her kindergarten class out of doors in some shady and attractive place. Her work will be made easier if at least many trips can be made in company with her class to the interesting things of nature. She will find it necessary to introduce each of these creatures one at a time. She must not take anything for granted. Mere physical proximity does not mean conscious presence. A knowledge of the simplest activities and types of behavior of the animals and birds and flowers will come to the childish learners only through active attention.

Through the medium of her nature-study lessons, the teacher will, of course, return frequently to the great and sublime fact of an all-wise Presence, moving upon the face of nature. She will find well-selected song-poems to be available factors in teaching her nature study.

"All things beautiful and fair,  
Earth and sky and balmy air,  
Sunny fields and shady grove,  
Gently tell us God is love."

### 9. The Growth of Character

Let us not overlook the fact that character is a thing to be grown through the conscious activities of the one who is to possess it. Character can not be merely discovered in a young human being. It can not be explained or argued into the mind of a child. It must be slowly and tediously evolved through the medium of his own conscious practices. If you meet an ordinary man who shows no respect for the Deity or reverence for his great handiwork, you may refer this tremendous fault to lack of conscious training. Some one simply permitted that part of his character to be omitted. He is suffering from retarded development. And, what is worse, it is now too late to introduce the forms and practices which, at one time, would have brought him out as a full-rounded son of the heavenly Father. So with all those attitudes of mind and tendencies to act which constitute a sound religious character. They do not merely happen, but they come into form as results of individual conduct. Some possess these virtues in a high degree and some in a low degree. Temperament and inherent nature of the individual will partly account for them. But they are attributable in a larger measure to radical differences in the conscious acts and attitudes of the growing child and youth.

Parents and teachers and all others concerned with the problems of child training must take it for granted that they will take out in form of religious character just about as much as they have

time and patience to put in through well-ordered processes of guidance. Verily, some men pass through life with the religious instinct dead within them, smothered to death during the years of early experience. Others happily go forward upon their way in possession of their full spiritual powers, and these may be thankful for the fact that their spiritual understanding was kept active during the formative period of their lives, and was finally directed into ways that are useful and uplifting.

**PART THREE**  
**The Elementary Grades**





## IX.

### MEETING THE NEW SITUATION

At the time of entering the regular public school, the child experiences a radical readjustment of his life. A new world is opened up to him. If he has been hitherto in the kindergarten, he is accustomed to sympathetic care and direction, rough and harsh conditions having been kept in the background. But now he is thrown among children of various ages and temperaments, where the give-and-take experiences are sharpened. There is much pushing and shoving, and the former soft, baby companionship has passed out of his life. Verily, the world is a new one to him and is filled with new childish interests and perplexities.

#### 1. Use the Creative Instinct

If the kindergarten work has been reasonably well done, the little hands are already trained to perform some simple acts and to construct at least a few crude devices. The cutting out of pictures, the putting together of toy houses and other play-things, and the childish assistance rendered in the care and arrangement of the materials—this has all constituted a very substantial beginning in creative industry. The same principle should be continued in the elementary grade of the Sunday school. The teacher should give the children something to do, as well as something to learn. She

may at least obtain the lesson-service blanks, such as are furnished by the standard supply-houses, and have these cut and pasted in the proper manner.

The creative impulse may be indulged in many other simple ways, especially through some form of service for the entire class. It will seal the bond of fellowship between pupil and teacher, if the members be asked to bring something for the use of all or to go on some errand in the interest of the school. One thoughtful teacher asked the members of her elementary class to meet her and co-operate in the making of a class banner. It required at least half a dozen very delightful meetings before the task was finished. At last the bright and attractive ensign was ready and hung in a conspicuous place where all the members of the class could view it with pride and the entire school contemplate it with unusual interest. It read:

### THE TRUE BLUES

#### FIRST PRIMARY CLASS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL

The teacher made this class name the motto of work for the term, every little member was proud of the banner and was pleased to help defend it through an attempt at regular attendance and creditable work. Out of this ingenious example there grew a movement which resulted, during the following year, in the making of beautiful banners for all the other elementary classes. Even though the little group be crowded into a very meager place in the corner of a noisy Sunday-school room, it will be found helpful to have the members assist

in placing some object, or in arranging the corner, so as to attract attention from the outside. Thus each one will be made to feel a sense of ownership and pride in the place.

**2. Something to  
Do**

The problem which we have in mind thus far in the chapter is that of developing in the minds of the members of the elementary class an attitude of goodwill toward the work of the Sunday school. If the reader will visit the ordinary class of this particular grade, he will find the little members present in body, but very often absent in mind, even during the attempt at a recitation. They will be looking in the direction of all the points of the compass. They are likely to be fidgety, pushing, shoving, squirming, drumming on benches, and the like. Now, if we can prepare the minds of these restless children so that they will anticipate the hour at the Sunday school, feel drawn forth because of a personal interest there, and desire each to contribute to its work a little part, then we shall have a very substantial beginning for the task of effective instruction.

Perhaps we are likely to overemphasize the matter of having the children do something at the Sunday school, as well as to learn something. Now, let us go over another illustration in thought that it might be of service to some of the younger teachers. An elementary instructor in a Methodist Sunday school obtained somewhere a very small and inexpensive cabinet, containing as many small drawers as there were members of the class. Each

of these drawers was labeled, and in it she placed a series of picture cards to be used throughout the term to illustrate the lesson of the hour. She also arranged for each member of the class a very simple attendance-record pad and supplied pencils. Upon arriving at the school, each child was expected to go to his own little drawer, bring out the picture card intended for the lesson of the day, and fill out the blank with a very few such simple data as the pupil's name, the day of the month, and so on. While all this may seem trivial enough, the children showed a keen interest in this personal responsibility and strove for unbroken records.

### 3. Play Is the Word

Play is the most significant term in the vocabulary of the child of the elementary grade.

Practically all that he does voluntarily is either directly in the interest of his play, or it is some sort of appointed task which he performs in order to win an opportunity to play. Sunday-school instructors, as well as public-school teachers, are beginning to realize the tremendous importance of this fundamental instinct in all child life, and they are changing their methods and courses of study to suit the issue. But the play of the child in the elementary grades is of the rougher and more boisterous nature. In the kindergarten grade, he was playing with his little mates, but *for* his beloved teacher. Now, in this more advanced grade, he is playing for the sake of their responses and approval and for the sake of his own aggressive purposes.

Now, the Sunday-school teacher will employ the attention of her pupils upon the spiritual lesson, and will secure their friendship and hearty co-operation in the work, largely in proportion as she recognizes this fundamental desire for play and gives it a liberal indulgence. She must learn to give them a happy, good time in exchange for their attention to the lesson. For, no matter how able and tactful she may be with the classroom exercises, the boys and girls of this elementary grade are almost certain to feel that they are attending the school under pressure of the officers and the parents at home. Class fellowship and class unity may be enhanced very materially through the use of the play disposition. The teacher simply must get out somewhere with the boys and girls. They will not demand much of a variety of games and outdoor experiences, but something significant must be undertaken. Probably each class should develop its characteristic practice.

I have known of more than one class of boys, ranging in age from seven to nine, who were willing to attend and work faithfully in the Sunday school for an entire year in exchange for the enticing practice of going on a fortnightly "hike," as they called it. Here was an idea which pulled them into a psychologic group, something to talk about, something to scheme about and something to dream about. I am satisfied that, without the element of extreme pressure, more than half of these boys would have quit the class had it not been for their very much-cherished outings.

#### 4. Finding Things Out

The teacher of an elementary class in the Sunday school will do well to recognize the fact that her children are traveling through the great natural cycle of discovery. At about the time they left the kindergarten and entered the day school, they began to make fun of fairies and Santa Claus and to brag about the inside information which they possessed regarding these airy things. On account of this spiritual impulse which an all-wise Creator has put into their natures, many well-meaning people seriously misunderstand the children whose ages range from about six to ten. Often these little ones are caught tearing their valuable possessions to pieces; they are eager to pry in and find out how things are put together. They want to know personally whether or not there is an inside part as well as an outside arrangement to an object. They are even ready and delighted to go to the place "where thieves break through and steal." Some people call all this work of the impulsive, inquiring disposition of the young, meanness. Others name it inherent devilry; but both statements indicate a serious misjudgment of the juvenile nature. The prying, breaking and smashing done by small boys, and even the acts of theft, are scarcely ever done in a spirit of ill-intention or in a spirit of mere wantonness.

I prefer to consider this crudeness of the young as an essential part of the young, growing nature and as God's way of leading the childish inquirer to find out the truth of the world. Moreover, if



left to their own native impulses and devices, the children of all the so-called well-bred families will engage in these crude acts of exploration. They will break into forbidden chests and cupboards, throw stones through the windows of vacant houses, punish stray dogs, wade into ugly mud-holes, climb over dangerous places, "guy" strangers who are passing, and carry away valuable property—all in response to the sublime request from within their own natures that knowledge of the world be obtained at any cost.

Now, the Sunday-school teacher will succeed in proportion as he can appreciate with joy and enthusiasm the so-called pranks and escapades natural to the boys and girls of his class, and he will do best by their development if he can find time to accompany them in some such lively experience and see that the form is preserved while the ill or the sting be taken out. Indeed, it is the very essence of good teaching in any school for the instructor to be guided by the intelligence and instinctive tendencies of the learner, even though these be crude, and to provide such helps and incentives as will enable the young explorer to find his way safely through to a desirable goal. Especially does this principle apply in the teaching of morals and religion. The child impulse to do wrong is allowed to make its start and is finally turned into an act that is good and developmental. Thus, what at first seems but an animal passion or a base desire is slowly transformed into a refined habit or a type of manly courage.



### 5. The Age of Fighting

All healthy and natural children are for a time extremely fond of something in the nature of fighting, bullying and teasing. This tendency is not a thing to be deplored, but rather one to be placed and guided. It is just as natural and divine a disposition as is the impulse to love and serve. Any of these may be good or bad, in accordance with the manner in which it is used and developed.

So the new teacher of the Sunday-school class of a dozen eight-year-old boys need not be surprised if he finds them engaged in a riotous sort of conduct when he first comes among them. Loud talk, pushing, striking, and even some low-tone swearing, may greet his ears. But if he knows his place sufficiently well, he will smile serenely at this and bethink himself as to how the young animal energy may be applied to tasks of a helpful nature.

Of one or two things we may be well assured; namely, that the brutish, fighting disposition so common to small boys is the crude beginning of a possible manly courage which, in years to come, having been properly schooled and organized, will perform its part in the defense of every good and righteous purpose of society. We may also feel certain that the quarreling and bantering practices of both boys and girls of the elementary grade are nature's way whereby these young individuals are being compelled to acquire valuable practices in the use of the vernacular, in the ready expression of their thought, in quick and apt repartee and in the elements of first-class argumentation.

**6. Aggressiveness  
is Dominant**

The reader will remember that we are attempting to assist the Sunday-school teacher through the effort to lead and develop his understanding in relation to the child of different ages. Now, the dominant note of the boys and girls of the lower elementary grades is aggressiveness. They are constantly throwing themselves forward into new situations. The world of experiences furnishes them an unending series of thrills; and it is our business, not only to permit their native impulses to have a liberal amount of exercise, but even to plan that such shall be the case in the interest of substantial character development. The strong personality is evolved only through the medium of a very large amount of trial-and-error experience; a personal contact with the world of actual affairs, the ins and outs, the ups and downs, the goings and comings. It is a series of very small, and yet very interesting, events which must enter personally into the life of the rightly growing young individual. If he could define his inmost purpose in a few suggestive words, he would very naturally say, "Turn me loose in the world and I will find out how it is and what it is made of."

So, in closing the chapter, I wish to make a most earnest plea in behalf of the aggressive disposition of the boys and girls. Let the Sunday-school teacher who has charge of them earnestly and prayerfully resolve to call nothing ill which is shown forth in their natural conduct. Let him resolve to accept every act, even the crude and

rough ones, as so much capital, out of which to reorganize good character. Let him expect little in the nature of ready moral religious responses in these children. But, at the same time, he may contemplate a very definite program, through the medium of which he is to bring them to some very helpful moral and spiritual decisions of their own. In other words, he will guide them through the mass of rough conduct and trivial error, or to a point where they will derive their own consciousness of right and wrong.

## X.

### TRAVELING WITH NATURE

To many who possess proficient insight and understanding it is a wonderful opportunity to be privileged to grow up with the child. The young human nature is best regarded as an ever-increasing stream of unfoldment and varied expression—a great fund of divine energy which will continue to break out somewhere during the entire formative period—if not in ways that are helpful, then in ways that are hurtful. But to spend much time with the children is not merely a means of instructing them alone. It tends to a transformation of the characters of all adults who deal continuously with the little ones.

The time will come when every course of study in the public schools, and especially in the higher institutions, will include a series of lessons suitable to bring the student into close familiarity with the manner in which human nature becomes fixed in character. Such a course of training most certainly inculcates a sympathy for all mankind and tends to make one wish to be of service to his fellows. The criminal is cruel and cold-blooded in dealing with his victims, but he has no knowledge of their inmost lives. It does not occur to many that their natures and his are very much alike at core, and to him that he could further his own purposes best

by assisting with theirs and contributing in every convenient way to their happiness rather than to their destruction. Indeed, even religion can not be well taught to those who have not come into sympathetic touch with the great heart of humanity.

**1. Inspiring  
Eagerness**

So, let the motto of this chapter be this: "Travel along the way with young human nature and you will then tend to acquire wisdom as well as happiness." There is something inspiring about the eagerness of healthy boys and girls as they rush forward in their ordinary spontaneous activities. Every fiber and every nerve within them seems to tingle with delight as they go unrestrained to the use of their sense organs. And, to the one who knows how to watch them properly, every move they make is thought of as so much of an addition to their previous stock of knowledge of the world and their ability to make future progress through it. Even the crudeness in their conduct is interesting, if not inspiring.

There is still much deception abroad in regard to the restrained child. Otherwise intelligent people often point to some very quiet boy and commend his perfect example to the attention of the parents of the more boisterous ones. But a critical examination will probably reveal the fact that the "model child" has something serious the matter with him. He may be ill, or restrained by fear of punishment, or suppressed through too much direction. True, the noise and confusion attending the natural conduct of a group of healthy boys and girls turned loose

in the midst of interesting things may at times become a strain upon our overworked nerves. But the romping, boisterous children, whose parents and teachers are constantly watching for an opportunity to turn this wholesome, unrefined conduct into something better—these are the ones whom we may more reasonably expect to become the big personalities of the future.

## 2. Clean Dirt and Democracy

The Sunday-school teacher of the boys and girls in the elementary grades needs frequently to hear a brief sermon on the democracy of simple apparel and the things and opportunities which go with it. There is always a possibility that he look with too much favor upon the daintily dressed, superfine children, and with some degree of displeasure upon those of opposite appearance. No children under twelve or thirteen should be very conscious about his wearing apparel. Neither should his mother be concerned about providing anything better than the plain, comely garb. The boys and girls who inspire some of us most are those who are dressed in very simple garments and who are ever ready to get down into the dirt and act naturally.

Children are very fond of burrowing in the earth, of throwing sticks and stones about, of making mud pies and constructing dams. Nearly all the forms of activities most suitable for them call for soiling and wearing out the clothing. It is pathetic to observe an eight-year-old girl who has been made so conscious of her personal appearance

through such overtraining in the care and tidiness of her garments that she can not relax and play and romp naturally among the others. Such a child has already been advanced far upon the way of aristocracy. She is certain to think of herself as something distinctively better than the others, and they, too, are certain to regard her with mingled feelings of wonder and illwill. The Sunday-school teacher can achieve not a little by means of tactful suggestions intended to inculcate the democracy of clothes and conduct. He will understand that the overdressed child, no matter how smart the little one may be in a few narrow lines of training, is a very much spoiled child, and is moving in a more or less seclusive circle outside the group of his fellows.

### 3. Religion and Snobbishness

The man of Nazareth was a democrat in all things save the plan of salvation. Those who accepted his gospel were a very select class, but this higher way of life was made open to all who were ready and willing to humble themselves before the cross. Now, one of the serious tasks of the church to-day is to keep down snobbishness and to exalt democracy. At times there are seen in an audience of worshipers certain persons—Christian people, too, so-called—who are so conspicuously dressed that they attract more attention than the sermon. Such vanity may always be traced to its source through the biography of the individual. Some one has sinned. Perhaps, during the childhood of the foolishly dressed individual, the parents



led him or her to believe in his peculiar superiority and thus fixed the attention too exclusively upon the self. Religion does not mix well with such vanities. The gospel of Christ has no favorable word for them. On the other hand, plainness, frankness, simplicity of garb and manner and a clean spiritual sense within are all approved by the teachings of the Master.

Now, if we are to bring all the boys and girls slowly into the fold, if we are ever to find out and perfect their characters to the extent that they may be fellow-workers with us all in the Master's vineyard, we Sunday-school teachers must begin early to inculcate democracy of dress and manner. We may do this best by indirection, by speaking and acting approvingly in our dealings with those who best represent the democratic ideal in question, and by showing some degree of disfavor in relation to those who would violate its terms.

**4. Teach Boys  
and Girls To-  
gether**

There is a foolish notion abroad that growing boys and girls must be kept more or less apart while under instruction and training, but I am thankful to say that it is slowly disappearing. The natural characters of the sexes, even during earlier years, are supplementary to each other. The boys need the softening and refining influences derived from the natural conduct of the girls. Conversely, the girls need the stimulant which comes from observing the vigorous and aggressive behavior of ordinary boys. Without the daily presence of girls to recite with and play with,

boys tend to become coarse and rough. Without the daily presence of boys likewise to commingle with, girls tend to become weak and negative. I like the courage of the Sunday-school teacher who attempts to handle the sexes together in the elementary grades.

We forget that the instructor is only one of their teachers; he is simply their managing instructor. All the other members of the class are contributing their part to the program of learning. Some of the recitations need to be conducted from the boys' point of view and others from the girls' point of view. Under the terms of this balanced schedule of responses, every member has a better opportunity to make his own fair deductions and to think out the ideals for his own conduct.

#### 5. Co-operation in Working

Not only should boys and girls recite together in school, but they should be taught to work together. Every grown man and good citizen should know from personal experience the rudiments of the work of ordinary women, especially the many tasks that pertain to housekeeping. Every worthy woman—and she has the same right to be called a citizen—should be familiar with the broad principles which guide business men and men of affairs in their daily conduct.

In every common piece of work which boys and girls may be called to perform, there is a point of contact for both sexes. The heavier and cruder part, the rough arrangements of things, the mathematical measurements, will be looked after by the

boys. The decorative part, the retouching, the esthetic arrangements, will be properly assigned the girls. Visit any ordinary playground without a young person in sight, and you can easily decide where the boys play and where the girls play. Visit a workshop under similar circumstances, and the same decision as to work is an easy one. Bring these two groups together in the same workshop or to the same playground and the discerning one will observe in the results a higher tone and a finer balance of things.

The Sunday-school teacher will find it a most charming practice to take the boys and girls together on their outings and to do some form of constructive work. Tramping over hills and through meadows, building lodgings and resting-places in the woods, constructing toy dams and bridges, making houses for the wild birds and squirrels, spreading a lunch on the lawn, telling stories of warfare and adventure—these and innumerable other juvenile activities, which the teacher may lead, will prove most satisfactory in case he has charge of a mixed class rather than of one sex alone.

#### 6. Singing and Swinging

We are anxious to have the Sunday-school teacher imbibe the full spirit of this ideal in the interest of the supplementary development of the boys and girls. If he has any misgivings as to its fine significance and as to its possibilities of spiritual instruction, let him call together in one class a dozen boys and girls, ranging in age from eight to eleven. Let him select a joyous song, with words

and music full of quick movement and rhythm. Let him lead the singing lustily and invite all present to join him. Now, if he has any music in his soul, the boys and girls will become unified beautifully, both in sentiment and in the spirit of the song. Under such training, they will rapidly learn to think of themselves, not as a separate group and away from the other sex group, but rather as a supplementary part of the whole. They will learn to feel the need of the presence, each group of the other. Thus a significant step will have been taken in the direction of preparing these young sex natures to go on through life in this beautiful co-operative manner.

Again, we must observe that too many men otherwise called good are coarse and brutish in their judgments of women, chiefly on account of an ignorance of the feminine nature, and this false judgment dates back to the time when these same men were kept wholly apart from girls and young women. Conversely, too, many women are crass and superficial in their judgments of men, because of similar omissions in their own earlier careers. I hope the day will come when it will be considered necessary to train the sexes together, all the way from the cradle to the end of the longest life. The officers of the Sunday school can do much to bring this happy day to pass.

#### **7. Keep Out Love Affairs**

The teacher of pre-adolescent young people must be careful not to push the boys and girls forward into the love-making stage of their growth.

The fact that they are so often separated at this age is suggestive of the misunderstanding about them. Many well-meaning people are foolish enough to begin teasing boys and girls about one another the moment they come into their presence. But if these young lives are allowed to behave in the natural way, and are trained together in the normal manner, they simply feel instinctively the presence, each of the other sex, and they respond appropriately. It is certainly fatal to good teaching and to normal character growth for the instructor to allow the practice of joking and jesting as to who among the boys is in love with what girl, and *vice versa*. He should not only discourage all this soft talk and premature discussion about the choosing of a sexmate and the like, but he should make it distinctively a point to put such a conversation, and all that goes with it, into the background. This intensive consciousness of the presence of the opposite sex is not yet a normal thing. Its indulgence means a weakening in some form or other of the manly and womanly characters of the future.

**8. Sentiment and  
Correction**

“What is a boy good for?” some one asked of a nine-year-old girl who, with a group of her mates, had suffered the annoyance of a rough gang of boys on the school playground. “A boy is a mean old thing,” she replied, with a snap of indignation in her voice. “What is a girl?” I asked of a ten-year-old boy who was throwing mudballs across the street at a group of girls of about his own age. “A girl is a soft, silly nothing,” he re-

plied with a sneer. Now, it is my most firm conviction that these answers are typical of an antagonistic sentiment often existing between the sexes during childhood, which is carried forward and developed into many hurtful forms for the society of grown men and women. And yet, nothing contributes to the well-being of the men and women of the world quite so effectively as a free, happy and well-directed mingling of the sexes throughout all the activities of childhood and youth.

The Sunday school is distinctively a place to inculcate these finer lessons for the future well-being of the race. Every act on the part of a boy which occurs in the presence of girls of his age is a direct means of their instruction, and contributes so much to their self-correction. Conversely, every act performed by a girl in the presence of boys of her age is a means of teaching and refining them and of helping them to fix their sentiments properly in anticipation of that time when they must assume a more serious responsibility in relation, not only to girls and women, but to the whole race.

So I urge again and finally, where it is at all practicable have every class in the Sunday school a mixed one. Have the tasks done, the reciting and the mingling socially during the open period, all an affair for both sexes. Thus take an advanced step toward a more congenial companionship of the adult sexes, toward a happier home life, and toward the more sympathetic character of the children. Thus contribute directly to the setting up of the throne of heavenly grace among the masses.



## XI.

### GETTING INTO THE GAME

During the ages of ten to twelve, inclusive, the gang interest is likely to break out in the boys. If two or more of them are accustomed to run together, one will develop as a sort of leader and dictator of the policies of the group. Along with this disposition to segregate in gangs, there will also develop a tendency to secretiveness. This self-formed organization must have its code of ethics and its unwritten laws. Usually this legislation is laid down arbitrarily by the accepted leader, and it is modified through the practices of the gang.

**1. A New Sense of Honor** "Honor thy father and mother" is the old Scriptural injunction which children are so often required to commit to memory. But the sense of honor in thought of their parents is not felt nearly so deep as this duty of honor to the members of the gang. It has been shown beyond question that this gang rule is the most binding code that enters the life of the young, any time before the period of adolescence. If left to their own devices, ordinarily boys, members of so-called good families, will lie and steal and violate many little sacred rules laid down to govern their private home life—all as a part of an effort to keep inviolate this inborn sense of duty to the gang.



Now, it is apparent that we must deal with this great instinctive force of loyalty to the gang as a sacred disposition, and, consistent with the theory of this text, we must do our best to travel with this current of energy rather than to attempt to stop it. We must make use of the fine spirit of juvenile loyalty, and at the same time, if possible, obviate its evils. If the whole truth were known, it would probably be revealed that those who have succeeded in summarily breaking up the gang, have also succeeded in weakening the characters of many of its sprightly young members.

**2. The Proper Use of Loyalty**      Unquestionably, the teachers in all classes of schools are experiencing much difficulty in dealing with the boy gangs. In many instances the teacher is in a fight with this strong young organization, and the boys regard him as their natural enemy. In many cases, also, the teacher is utterly routed in the bitter contest which is carried on between himself and them.

So, what we especially wish to achieve here—and the Sunday-school teacher is in an excellent position to undertake the task—is to direct the loyalty of boys to their gang in such a way that it will do good to their present characters and render a possible worthy service to their future manhood. As was stated above, the members of the gang are instinctively fond of their rules. They may be heard frequently repeating them and applying them in directions of their conduct. Now, let the teacher suggest that they adopt a rule substan-

tially as follows: Never tell anything on the gang or about one of its members unless some actual wrong has been done; then, you must both report the wrong and do all you can to get rid of the member who is guilty. For example, stealing is wrong, and the boy who is guilty of theft should be put out. So with breaking up property or the violation of any of the laws or ordinances. Each member may be pledged to assist in the keeping of all these rules, and the organized group may be called upon to act as a unit in loyalty of service, of law and good order. What this gang spirit especially craves and requires is something worth while to do. Let the teacher instruct the boys as to how to defend the Sunday school against those who would speak ill of it, or the home community against its detractors. Let him point out to the boys how in many ways they may set right a few moral wrongs in the local situation.

### 3. The Gunckel Method

The late J. E. Gunckel, of Toledo, discovered a very fundamental principle in the government of boys, and, as a rule, he made a wise use of it. The method was, indeed, one of self-government. The boys all loved him, chiefly because he understood them and looked at things from their point of view. Little wonder so many of them have been willing to contribute to the erection of a fitting memorial of his life. Mr. Gunckel's method of handling the juvenile wrong-doer was a very simple one. He set the gang over against the individual. If a boy was found guilty of lying,

or theft, or cigarette-smoking, for example, a few selected members of the gang of his age met him out somewhere and either inflicted some physical punishment or threatened to do so, exacting the promise that he would reform at once. In the usual case, the thing worked charmingly. As a rule, no boy will persist in doing an ill thing when he knows that the members of his crowd are against him and that he is in danger of being pounced upon and beaten by them.

A critical examination of the conduct of the boys in any community will show that they are already doing more to govern themselves than are their elders. What they need is the wise counsel of their elders, and the able direction of their instinctive dispositions to engage in civic welfare. In general, it is the same old problem of showing a blind instinct what it were good to do. Once the members of the group have acquired a clear vision of their duty, the impulse for mutual benefit and for the good of the order will suffice to bring about the performance of many good deeds.

**4. The Sunday School and Unity** Not infrequently the Sunday school is both loosely organized and loosely managed. There is no sense of unity, and therefore no team work, among its classes and members. It would be very helpful for the superintendent or some other able officer to prepare a plan which might reveal to the whole school the unity of the organization. The groups and divisions, the classes and the names of the teachers, might be displayed on a chart, in-

dicating with some definiteness where each member belongs. Then, it could be explained briefly as to what each subdivision means in the organization of the whole school. Children are very fond of standing out where they may be recognized. It would not be difficult to assign some individual task to each of the younger classes. There are picnics, social gatherings and special occasions to be provided for. If the class of boys is given one of these tasks as an especial appointment and their sense of pride and honor is appealed to, they will most gladly contribute their part and thus acquire a deeper respect for their own organization and for the entire school. Thus the able leader gives all some duty to perform.

What we desire is that each young individual shall feel that he is a member of a group; that he, in a sense, belongs to the organization and owes it a strict measure of loyalty and service. We want each member to become personally conscious of the Sunday school as an organized force, and to know at least a little about its purpose. We want him to feel that he is a responsible member of its organization, that he owes loyalty to the whole community as well as to the State and nation. It is not sufficient merely to say, "Boys, your country needs you." We must show the boys during all their growing years just what this need is and give them practice in performing it. Loyalty, or patriotism, is a natural growth in the individual life, which results from deeds performed, rather than from words uttered.

So the Sunday-school teacher will lead his class of young boys on toward righteous citizenship and toward a possible church service through the instrumentality of a thoughtful direction of the gang spirit and of the sense of loyalty.

**5. The Girls and Their Gang** This same gang spirit is found to be present among pre-adolescent girls, but it manifests itself in different ways. There is less tendency to the more riotous types of conduct, such as fighting and stealing. Nevertheless, the members have their closely guarded secrets, which usually relate to the affairs of their youthful society. Among other things, girls will guard sacredly what they suppose to be forbidden stories read to them by one of their members and forbidden knowledge about sex matters. However, the bond is not so close as that among the members of the boy group. A larger per cent. will break away and reveal the secret.

But, again, we must urge the Sunday-school teacher to respect this secret fellowship which naturally exists among all promising young girls who are allowed to run together in groups; for we find in it, as we did in consideration of boys, the embryonic state and the essence of a wholesome, helpful adult citizenship. The spirit of loyalty of the members to the group and the sanctity of the meeting-place must not be unnecessarily violated. The teacher will find, for example, that the girls are most probably carrying some secret literature into their den. She need not press the situation too hard in an effort to find out just what these

stories are. It would be far better for her to accept the situation in a pleasant way and quietly to offer something better as a substitute. It may be assumed that the girls will read and discuss her helpful literature quite as eagerly as they will the cheaper variety. She must understand the nature of their instinctive needs at this particular age, and attempt to select stories of a romantic nature and such as bring in a considerable element of the wild and daring activities. Nothing tame or soft will supply the present need. No story that has a very palpable moral will be suitable for these young ages and dispositions.

**6. Putting Loyalty into Service** Again, it is suggested that this instinctive disposition of the young girls to be in honor bound to the group may be put into service of the Sunday school and the community by giving the girls something to do which is distinctively their own. Let them make a motto, decorate the classroom, prepare a lunch or learn a new patriotic song. When such a thing has been achieved, see that the matter has due publicity. Thus the girls will be made to understand that their good deeds are known and recognized. These young members will take especial delight in something that will contribute to the social progress of the Sunday school and to the well-being of the larger society.

**7. A Game of Self-direction** Under analysis it may be shown that the good life is one which is made up of a series of worthy and righteous deeds, which deeds are per-

formed, not necessarily through strenuous effort at self-direction, but which come easily and naturally. But back of the deed lie the thought and the specific purpose to perform it. Even children, and by all means young people, need more practice than they receive in the conscious definition and the purposive redirection of their own careers. So, it is suggested that the Sunday-school teacher try out some new game of social, ethical or spiritual self-direction.

It is hoped that the spirit of this text will not be misunderstood. The largest part of the task of successful religious instruction is to organize the young life through its daily acts so that it will naturally perform worthy deeds, and so that when the occasion arises it will react favorably in religious ways. But all of this must be brought at least partly under the self-direction of the individual. The boys and girls of the elementary-school grade will naturally take an interest in any form of recitation which calls for their personal opinions and purposes. They are fond of talking.

**8. The Best Thing to Possess** Suppose you ask a mixed class of boys and girls, ranging in age from nine to twelve, a question substantially as follows: What is the best thing in all the world? What would you rather have than anything else? Every member of the class should be asked to contribute to this exercise, and each one may be allowed to defend his choice. Many and varied will be the replies. The teacher may even announce a week in advance that



this question is to come up for answer and discussion, and that each one must be ready with his contribution.

Now, the chief value of the foregoing discussion lies in the large number of suggestions which each one will receive from the others, and in the conscious effort on the part of each to place his choice over against that of others and to think out more definitely than ever before a purpose for his own youthful life and work.

**9. The Best Place  
to Go**

Likewise, the teacher may ask each child to contribute in turn a statement as to his choice of the best place in the world to which he might go and make a visit. Not only will each give an interesting reply, but the discussions and explanations of what would be learned on the journey and of the best purposes of the trip will again bring out many new and helpful ideas for the various members to take away with them.

The tactful teacher will keep in mind the thought that she is conducting a class in the Sunday school, and she will offer all possible suggestions which might assist the members in reorganizing their secret purposes so as to harmonize with the things of religion and the spirit.

**10. The Best  
Thing to Do**

Again, the boys and girls will be given perhaps an entire week to answer a most important question: What is the best thing in the world for me to do? What performance or act or achievement would be most helpful to myself, to my character

development, to my Sunday school, to my home community or to my country? Let it be something that a real boy or a real girl might reasonably undertake.

Out of all this most charming discussion, there will be derived many suggestions as to what constitutes praiseworthy and patriotic service. There will be many hints of what it is going to mean to choose a life purpose and to enter upon an honest vocation. There will likewise be suggestions as to what deeds and occupations are unworthy, and to be carefully avoided. This will be the teacher's especial opportunity for inculcating respect for the plain, every-day work which is being performed by the great masses of the people of the world and sympathy for all weary toilers.

## II. The Best Person to Please

Whom would you rather please than anybody else? Who is the best person in the world?

Who is the one who would befriend you the longest and possibly be willing almost to sacrifice his or her life for you? Who is this best person of all for you to please, and how would you go about it to please him or her? Such will be the substantial explanation of another valuable question to be put before the boys and girls of the Sunday-school classes. And again they will be given ample time to ponder over it and to receive from others suggestions concerning the answer. The discussion of this question will, of course, bring to the minds of the young the ideal of motherhood and fatherhood, as well as the ideal of friendship.

Children are naturally rather thoughtless of their parents and other close friends, but this thoughtlessness is largely one of either ignorance or misunderstanding. This discussion about the best person will give the opportunity to effect in the minds of the young pupils a clearer definition of friendship and a deeper sense of duty and loyalty to parents and brothers and sisters.

**12. The Best Person to Displease** Whom would you prefer to displease? Whom would you get in the way of, or injure, and why? This question may at first seem inappropriate, but the purpose of asking it is, first, to reveal to the teachers the possible hatred and dislike which may exist in the minds of her class members; second, to serve as a means of dispelling some of their juvenile illwill. Children are usually very unreasonable in their hatred and dislike. They jump at conclusions, or listen to a few illogical and detached statements, and at once begin to attach blame. The discussion here contemplated should clear the minds of the young members of much of this unnecessary ill feeling, and should encourage them to look for the better side of the dispositions of those around them. Biblical examples of tolerance and forgiveness may be cited during the course of the lesson.

**13. The Best Thing to Give Away** Again, we have chosen a topic upon which the boys and girls will offer many interesting discussions. It will be an easy matter for the teacher to detect the evidence of a self-

ishness in their personalities; not a few will decide to give away something which they are not personally very much concerned about or something which can be easily spared. A few will make statements which may prove valuable as mottoes for the whole class. The teacher will naturally enlarge upon these, and perhaps make the point that a gift should carry with it some measure of sacrifice, as well as of genuine love, from the giver. She will especially attempt to disabuse the minds of the young members of the all too common but erroneous sentiment that a gift must be thought of as part of a process of exchange of favors. We do not really give to those whom we expect to return the favor; we simply trade with them. We actually give to those from whom we expect nothing in return other than their love and gratitude.

**14. The Best One  
to Worship**

Finally, the children may be asked a question which will not be answered at all easily by them, as it will lead into abstract discussions. Nevertheless, there may be brought out of it a helpful result, especially after their presumed practice in discussing the easier questions listed above. Whom is it best to worship, and why? is a question which every one must be called upon sooner or later to answer. Then, why not put the question early, and at least point the youthful mind toward the highest goal of their lives, as well as anticipate the more rational belief and worship which will be possible for them during maturity? In the attempt to discuss this question, the teacher will naturally have

to revert to dogmatic methods rather than to explanation and logical reason. But a certain amount of dogmatic teaching is necessary and helpful in the lives of the young. These young must be trained to accept certain fundamental truths and principles, with a statement that the future will bring them a more rational understanding of what it all means.

## XII.

### EFFECTIVE BIBLE TEACHING

As was urged above, no very direct moral instruction will excite the interest of the boys and girls in the elementary grades. Outside of the more or less boisterous out-of-door conduct, previously outlined for them, nothing else will appeal to them quite so effectively as a story which is full of tragedy and excitement. It may seem a harsh saying, but these young people are not yet beyond the period of instinctive craving for witnessing the affairs of tragedy and bloodletting. They want to know who killed whom and how he did it, and how the battle was won and who were the heroes in the conflict. It is the natural way of life.

✓ **1. More of  
Human Nature**

If we are to come close to the hearts of the young boys and girls, we must first win them to our side. They must believe in us, and they will do so only in case we have something for them. They will not like us simply because we are good and honest citizens, but more particularly because we can supply something which will meet the demand of their instinctive cravings. Now the question arises, Can we meet these children on their own level, give them the substance of the great tragic stories of history and public literature, and at the end bring them to a higher standard of motive and

self-direction? If this can not be done, then I scarcely know what more to suggest by way of training these youthful minds in the Sunday school. They simply will not remain quiet and listen to us while we attempt to instruct them directly in morals and religion. During this vain effort, they are certain to start a little drama of their own.

So I believe it to be practicable to introduce at this point, and through the medium of well-arranged stories, the many heroic characters of the Bible, especially to the undeveloped natures of boys and girls ranging in age from six to twelve. To these eager listeners, drama is the very essence of truth. While they will often question a story-teller as to whether the thing really happened or not, they are always satisfied with a narrative which has the semblance of truth. In case of the Scriptural story, they may be told dogmatically that it is true, that it happened at such and such a time, and that some of the participants at least were moving more or less under divine guidance.

## 2. The Truth of the Scriptures

There is also much discussion among Christian men and women as to the exact meaning, or the right interpretation, of the Scriptural stories; for example, that about Jonah and the whale. But, in presenting these narratives to the children, we may be certain of the fact that they do not question as sharply as adults the reasonableness of the stories they hear. They are more credulous at this age, and may not necessarily be aware of any adult controversy over the interpretations of the Scrip-



tures. They are too young to have presented to them, except in a very dogmatic way, any argument as to the authenticity or the inspired nature of the Bible. Probably the teacher himself hesitates to tell certain of the Bible stories for fear the children will doubt them, and he will have to commit himself on the subject. In an instance where the story appeals to him in that way, it is advisable for him to omit it and take up one which he understands better. The Bible is so full of good, usable stories that the young teacher can well avoid the difficult ones.

**3. Low Ideals of the Ancients** Some teachers of the young have been very backward about relating certain great Scriptural dramas because of the coarse and brutish elements which constitute a part of the story. There are many incidents of outrageous murders and cruel executions. Even the so-called good and heroic characters are often guilty of inhuman acts. Again, it may be urged that the young pupils will not necessarily be injured by the details of these stories. The teacher will find them making comparisons between ancient and modern customs. Often he will hear one of them ask, "Kings do not murder their subjects now, do they?" The answer will constitute a valuable juvenile lesson in civic progress. It can be shown in truth that kings and other rulers have much less autocratic power to-day than they had in ancient times, that they are more enlightened and humane, and that they are now in many instances subject to the will of the people themselves.

#### 4. The Truth About Human Nature

In this connection, it would seem highly proper for the teacher to attempt to explain the brutal element which appears to be hidden in the nature of all mankind. Unquestionably the awful European war, in progress while this book is being written, has brought some great surprises and many a deep disappointment to the majority of the students of our nation. In the course of the terrible conflict it would seem that cruelties, unsurpassed in human history, are being perpetrated. Now, how can we explain this? Some of the alert boys of the class will press their Sunday-school teacher for an explanation. And he may perform this service about as follows: Remind the children of the fact that when intensely angry they are, themselves, guilty at times of very unbecoming deeds—acts which they are deeply ashamed of a few hours later. He may explain that in a sense all those who are engaged in the war are steeped in a passion of rage and hatred; that the conflict wages back and forth, each side receiving serious punishment from the other and attempting to mete out a heavier one. He may explain that men go into battle at first more or less tenderhearted and sympathetic for the suffering which they must witness, but that they gradually “get used to it,” as we say. The vastness of the scene, the constant program of turmoil and horrible catastrophe, the killing and mangling of men on all sides of them and during practically all hours of the day, gradually bring those witnessing such

awful events into a sort of dazed and stupefied condition of mind. Urged on by a feeling of resigned despair, they come to accept what seems to be an unsurmountable fate.

There is one well-authenticated and significant occurrence which the boys of the class should be reminded of; namely, that a considerable number of the men fighting in the ranks in the great European war never intentionally kill or hurt even an enemy. Many of them point their guns upward, but shoot when they are ordered to do so. They are willing to go into battle and be killed, but they will not allow even a stern commander to compel them to take the lives of their fellow-men.

Still another aspect of the war may be brought out at this time. It is that the majority of those who return alive from the conflict will be inclined neither to boast that they ever killed a man nor to relate any incident during which they wantonly took human life, or even caused suffering. To many of these ex-soldiers there is to come later a serious struggle with their conscience. Many of them will pray to God a thousand times for forgiveness on account of the part they took in the horrible massacre.

The eager and inquiring boys of the class may also be assured that the fighting men who are fortunate enough to return to their peaceful occupations will do so with the same quiet demeanor which marked their previous lives. After they have been discharged from the ranks and are back to their old places under the authority of their own

personal conscience, they will behave as before, and not be brutal and contentious, or dangerous to associate with, as some of the boys might naturally expect them to be.

**5. Study the  
Great Characters**

The Sunday-school teacher will entertain her youthful class most, and do best for this character development, through the use of stories of Biblical heroes of the first rank. Unfortunately, there are only a few women whose life stories will fit into this purpose; but even girls are most fond of tragic stories of the male heroes, and they may derive not a little benefit from listening to them.

The stories of the great Scriptural characters will be made to play around the centers of passion and motive. Anger, hatred, jealousy, vanity, ambition, love, sympathy, fidelity, unselfishness, sorrow, sin, repentance and forgiveness—these are some of the great dispositions which have swayed the human heart and contributed to the history of mankind.

**6. Make Slow  
Progress**

The wise teacher of pre-adolescent boys will be very patient in his endeavor to reach his ideal moral and religious conclusions. An opinion which is worth very much usually must have time to grow and mature. He need not be disappointed or shocked at the manifest tendency of the boys to admire the types of some of the most cruel and inhuman characters of the story. If they speak their minds freely, they will frequently approve deeds of great violence and of fundamental wrong. It is the Sunday-school teach-

er's business at this point to give his interpretation of the case in a positive and perhaps a more or less dogmatic manner while he goes on with the narrative. Presumably, the same general point will call for interpretation in the lesson to follow. On each occasion he will pronounce his matured moral judgment and continue as before.

Now, it may be weeks, or even months, before the teacher begins to observe positive results in the sentiment of the members of his class. But in time these little judgments will most certainly appear and bring with them the highest assurance possible of the success of his teachings. Even that boy who contended a year ago that "it was all right for David to have another man killed in battle so he could take his wife because he was king, and kings have a right to do as they please"—even that outspoken young member will most probably now be observed softening his judgments of such things not a little so as to make them harmonize with what he has learned to anticipate as the judgment of his teacher.

It is precisely this patient and tolerant dealing with the coarse and immature judgments of the members of the young class which marks the successful Sunday-school teacher. He is slow to rebuke and even slower to offend any member who stands out for the time in manifest opposition to his own interpretations of the lesson. He understands the operations of the inner law of growth of judgment. He knows how a point of view and an attitude of mind are arrived at. He knows how to

put the more preferred judgment which may be hit upon by one member of the class prominently above the less preferred of the others. The story, with its discussions, thus grows into a fine game of redirecting the thought and the purpose of the young members through the use of their own trial-and-error statements.

**7. Some of the  
Great Stories**

Children of the elementary grades will listen with eager attentiveness to such stories as the Biblical account of the creation of the world. To them it is not a question as to whether or not God called a man and inspired him to write down this act in a truthful manner. The interest is in the immense movements and the awful changes upon the face of nature. The story is entirely natural enough to be real. The teacher may offer it as an authentic act of God's own handiwork without shocking the faith of even the young. And as confirmatory, he may refer to the geologic catastrophies which are taking place in these modern times.

Likewise, a story of the Deluge, and that of the Tower of Babel, may be related and connected with modern events of a mighty nature which are still beyond the control of man, and are still under the direction of the heavenly Father. Such things as floods and earthquakes still prevail upon the earth and sweep away vast numbers of people. For example, during the present season it is estimated that one hundred thousand were destroyed by the great floods in China alone.



The young are inclined to believe that man is ruling in the world to-day, and perhaps that those near them and of their own kin are arbitrarily guiding and directing human events. So it will be a real achievement for them to understand from Scriptural stories that God is ruling in the universe just as much as he did at the dawn of creation. For them to realize in their crude way that God is at work in the world, directing its movements, presiding over its great events and slowly making it over into a new one—this is a very substantial step toward a scientific attitude of mind.

**8. Settling a  
Quarrel**

The Sunday-school teacher should not fail to present to the elementary pupils the significant story of the quarrel between Abraham and his nephew, Lot. It will be worth the time of the entire period to tarry at the point where Abraham made a fair and honest division of the property and sent his young relative away with his own, happy and satisfied. So, what on some occasions would have developed into a big family feud or a tribal war, was settled amicably and without even the use of harsh words.

**9. Hint of a  
Higher Motive**

It is not our purpose to make out a lengthy list of Scriptural heroes in order to show how to use the stories of their careers in the Sunday-school class. We especially desire here to point out to the teacher what interest in the motives and experiences of the past he may expect to find hidden in the natures of his class members and how he may



apply the principles of pedagogy to this situation. There is one particular aspect of the juvenile character which we wish to call attention to at this time, and that is the rather stern sense of justice which occupies the young minds while listening to the story of warfare and cruelty. One person in the narrative kills another in a spirit of revenge. "Good! Serves him right!" is the expression, as the youth renders his natural decision strictly in accordance with the old Scriptural saying, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But we should introduce here a new type of judgment, and one which was introduced into the world conspicuously by the man of Nazareth; that is, magnanimity or forgiveness. Take, for example, the story of David and Saul, and bring out the point that David did not slay the king, who had done him wrong, although there was opportunity to do so. Emphasize here the beautiful companionship and friendship which developed between David and Jonathan; show that Jonathan may have loved his father and at the same time shielded David against the attack of Saul.

At this point it is well to bring in the many deeds of forgiveness which Christ performed, and to show that David, the lineal ancestor of Christ, foreshadowed in his life this remarkable generosity of spirit.

In this connection, and especially as a helpful lesson for girls, it would be well to introduce the story of the friendship of Ruth and Naomi. The point to make here is that Ruth clung to her

mother-in-law because of a deep feeling of love and a close tie of friendship; that she gave up her own interests, and even her own people, and took a most humble and unselfish purpose into her life. Of course, the story will be carried forward far enough to show that this unselfish decision on the part of Ruth meant something most significant for the history of God's people.

**10. God is over  
All**

It seems to me that one general purpose must dominate our thought in the religious instruction of the adolescent boys and girls; namely, to fix in their minds the idea that God is over all. By taking any of the great events in human history and all of the stories of Biblical literature, we can show them that sooner or later the big events, which seem for a time to be under the absolute dominance of some master or ruler, later have to be turned over to the purposes of the Ruler of the world. A wonderful system of rewards and punishments is involved in all this history of human struggle. It is a remarkable drama of intermingling trial and error which shows in a general way the tragic story of man, his effort to find out the meaning of his own existence and to understand the purposes of the Most High.

It will not weaken the efforts of the boys and girls if we make clear to them that sooner or later all selfish human purposes must fail; that the most powerful rulers must in time yield up every vestige of their authority and bow down to the inevitable; that the tragedy and conflict in the world, as well

as the joy and the comedy of human existence, must in time become conformable to those mighty laws which God in his own wisdom has seen fit to lay down for the government of the universe. And out of all this remarkable story even small boys and girls can gather a few most significant truths, such as respect for the law and order of the world, a disposition to shape their lives in accordance therewith, and a small measure of reverence for God.



**PART FOUR**  
**The Adolescent Problems**



### XIII.

#### THE PROBLEM OF SOCIABILITY

If the author of this text were asked to take a class of Sunday-school pupils of the high-school age, it would be his disposition to ask for some of the young people of both sexes. If the policy of the organization forbade any such arrangement, then the next best thing would be to have a class of either of the sexes, with a class of the other seated as near to them as would be practicable. Unquestionably, we have now arrived at a period of growth in the life of the young when a free and carefully guarded social mingling of the sexes is imperative. How shall we accomplish this?

##### **1. The New Outlook**

When the girl reaches the age of about twelve or thirteen, and the boy becomes fourteen or fifteen, these two are mutually attracted to each other, in response to profound organic changes within the physical being. There are new and significant mental and spiritual changes. To these young people the entire world tends to become a new and beautiful thing. There is a natural disposition to reinterpret ordinary experiences in terms of their relationship to the conduct of the people. The adolescent boy is now both reflective and introspective. Secretly he weighs every contemplated act of his own and every form of conduct of his



fellows. What will they say if I do this? How will they like it if I do that? What do they think of my clothes? How will she act if I say this? The foregoing questions are samples of what he silently asks himself, as a personal equation begins to loom up in his conscience.

The thing which we teachers of the adolescent boys and girls must understand above all else at this time is the fact of this new so-called interest which dominates the secret thought and purpose of the young person, and so gives a radically different turn to his career. If we miss this point, we miss all. At this particular age of his unfoldment, the youth would rather be right than President. To be right is to be regarded favorably by the young people of his age and to be admired by all of the young girls, and most especially by a certain one whose very presence disturbs noticeably the action of his heart as well as his outer conduct.

## 2. Love's Young Dreams

There is nothing more beautiful in all this wide world than the young love dreams of youths and maidens. They contain the very essence of music and poetry and all of those other fine things which help to give this plain old world its aspect of beauty and sublimity. If we can once learn how rightly to direct and manage this great force which comes up from the depths of the young nature, then we may direct the growing character into a form of strength and substantiability. But if we fail in our task and permit the raging torrent of adolescent love to turn into forbidden ways, it will

in time dash its victim upon the shoals of dissipation and despair. What a pitiable wreck that human life is when it has once been completely submerged in the sin of sexual perversion. And, how many there are who have gone into this evil way.

### 3. Go with the Tide

If there is ever a time in the entire period of individual existence when one should travel with the tide and not against it, it is now. I have never known a teacher, either in public school or Sunday school, who was strong enough to stand out abruptly against the united purposes of a class of young persons of this interesting high-school age. Many have tried this difficult task, but they have usually failed ignominiously. On the other hand, the one who will work himself into the good graces of adolescent boys and girls, can, in time, slowly turn them toward higher and better things.

Two prominent matters must be recognized in the beginning of our attempt to deal with the adolescents. One is, that if we segregate them in the school and the open places, they will still have their thoughts and reflections about one another and will naturally acquire a set of coarse and immoral dreams. Another is, that if we allow them an unrestrained mingling, to the extent of their following their own devices, then they will tend to go into shameful excesses. The happy medium between these two extremes is a cheerful and sympathetic guidance of the activities of the young people and a provision for their direct coming together, as we shall presently try to indicate.

#### 4. The Teacher a Lover

The Sunday-school teacher of boys and girls of the adolescent age should himself be happily in love. Under no circumstances should there be selected for the place one who is soured on the world or who has in any way failed to experience and appreciate the extreme value of love's young dream. Under ideal conditions, some man or woman who has been happy in the choice of his lifemate, who has taken a successful and congenial part in the making of a good home, will be the one to appoint. If the teacher of these young persons be a single man or woman, then he should at least be an ardent lover, one who is dreaming fondly of the time when he is to become a co-partner in the significant task of building up a home. All the world loves a lover, we say. But, more properly speaking, all lovers are generous in their dispositions toward the world at large, and especially generous toward other lovers; while those who are not in love can not deal successfully with the youthful age, when love's young dreams are the biggest things in life. All good teachers are lovers.

#### 5. How to Teach Them

So it may be stated in general that one can teach a youth and maiden almost anything worth while, if he will first make himself a member of their group, by showing an actual appreciation of their point of view and by providing those social occasions so necessary for their proper growth and development. If they are happy and well adjusted in their social affairs, so that their secret dreams

may be based upon wholesome and uplifting acts and situations, then it may be said that they are well prepared to receive spiritual nature, and are also probably ready to enter actively into the work of the church.

The young people of the age here considered must have social affairs. But all this should be provided to suit the requirements of a well-thought-out program, arranged to include other helpful activities. Under ideal conditions, the young people of the high school will have every day some plain home work to perform. They will be required to prepare faithfully their regular school lessons; and during the intermission periods they will be permitted to intermingle frequently and joyously in the schoolroom or upon the playground. They need the healthy physical and mental reactions which come from what we elders are prone to call their "soft and silly ways"—the playful pulling and shoving and romping, the jesting and teasing and bantering, the rigorous games and loud yelling and enthusiastic rooting.

As soon as is practicable, the Sunday-school teacher should take an inventory of his class of youths or maidens and determine to what extent they are enjoying these innocent social experiences. After that, his next well-chosen effort will be to supplement these experiences, in case they are not adequate. There must be parties, picnics and the like in plentiful amount, so that every member of the class will have something happy and helpful to dream about as he goes on his daily round.

### 6. Social Sensitiveness

During this stormy period of adolescence, an extreme degree of social sensitiveness develops. The young person exaggerates in his mind the thoughts which others may have regarding him. He is especially afraid of what he calls making a "break," which may cause some one to regard him unfavorably. In many cases he merely imagines he has committed some social irregularity. The Sunday-school teacher should understand this situation, and thus make it possible to keep all the members in the class. Some of them will be offended at the remarks made by others. The more sensitive ones are constantly suffering from such causes. Not unfrequently a thirteen-year-old girl will drop suddenly out of the class without any apparent excuse. She does not seem to wish to return. Now, what is the matter? Why, simply this: another girl of her age, but somewhat more forward than herself, made some cutting remark about her personal appearance, or a piece of wearing apparel which she had on, and the sensitive one is now suffering from this supposed indignity. The teacher will need to know how to counteract this unnecessary offense in the mind of the victim, and his best method of doing so will be to remind the girl of some quality in which she surpasses the others.

On another occasion, a fourteen-year-old boy will quit the class and declare that he doesn't care anything about Sunday school any more, and isn't going back. Now, what is the matter with him? Very probably another youth much more brazen

than himself has cut him to the bone by making a remark about some trivial matter, such as the size of his feet or the style of his necktie, at which remark the other members of the class naturally laugh. Trivial as these things may seem, they are the very matters out of which the great issues of life develop. Under conditions such as that of the youth referred to above, there is always a feeling of resentment. The young person is inclined to do something merely for spite. He desires to get even. He will probably substitute for the Sunday school some form of dissipation. He may run away at that particular hour to some tough resort, or go with those who are taking a trip to some luring place.

#### **7. The Personal Conference**

It will be a happy arrangement indeed if the Sunday-school teacher can have a personal and confidential visit with each member of his class. On an occasion of this kind, he must make it perfectly clear to his young friend that everything said between them, if the case at all warrants, will be held in strictest confidence. Under such circumstances, he will be able to obtain the whole truth from the pupil and thus place himself in a position to render some valuable help. He will be especially called upon to arrange a private meeting with those members of the class who do not seem to be getting along well with their work or who are inclined to drop out.

Our thought here is that one can not successfully manage a certain part of the conduct of a

young person until he is acquainted with his whole life. If I were attempting to teach the Bible lesson to any youth or maiden, I should most certainly try to become acquainted with the general nature of his daily conduct: what sort of work he is doing, both in and out of school; whom he associates with; where he goes evenings and Sundays and on picnic occasions; whether or not he has frequent association with a parent or some other person who is acting as a confidential adviser.

#### **8. Religion and Clothes**

At the time of adolescence, the clothes question enters vitally into all the problems of character development. If there be considerable unevenness in the style and manner of dress of the class members, there may be expected so much of a disturbing factor in the Sunday-school lesson work. Perhaps a few members of the class will be inclined to dress in an extreme fashion and to become the envy of other members. The best way to deal with this situation is an indirect one. The teacher may be able to say something about this affair to the proper person in the private conference. But he may perhaps achieve most through the inculcation of a wholesome sentiment as to the significance of clothes. He will insist on every proper occasion that the wearing apparel is only a superficial part of character; that many wicked and depraved persons, as well as many good Christian people, are seen wearing the finest of clothes; that the test of character is to be revealed through an analysis of the whole life. The young people will listen atten-



tively as to what the teacher sets greatest value upon. If he continues to praise honest work in the home and in the school, and an honest purpose for the every-day life, then the pupils will place a less important estimate upon the superficialities, while they endeavor to make themselves pleasing in respect to the more fundamental matters just named. Not unfrequently, those who are unable to shine through the medium of the finest wearing apparel are deserving of great praise because of their worthiness in respect to some other more substantial things.

So the teacher's attitude toward the whole of life, and especially toward the plain, substantial things of every-day affairs, will count for much in shaping the thought of the pupil. For, what the young person especially desires is a sense of inner worth, and an appreciation of the fact that in the sight of those best capable of judging he is in some respects praiseworthy. If he and his teacher can have a clear understanding in regard to his best and most pleasing qualities, he will continue with the class, and will hold up his head and receive the spiritual instruction in response to this secret satisfaction about his own life and in an endeavor to make it even more commendable in the thought of his teacher and his fellows.

**9. Sin is Not Natural** Many well-meaning persons are misjudging, and therefore mistreating, the young people through the error of believing that sin is natural to unrestrained youth. On the other hand, I be-

lieve that sin and wickedness at first present an ugly and unattractive aspect to the young people. They are drawn into habits of evil simply for want of a better outlet for their energies. Thus we have failed to understand them and to perform our duty respecting them. Thus every youth who goes astray represents some one's sin of neglect.

In thought of the topic here under discussion, the teacher will probably have in mind some of the so-called secret sins of youth, and wonder how he might best obviate them. It is not our purpose to go into treatment of such affairs at this time, but we are strongly inclined to lay down as a general rule this; namely, that positive treatment is better than negative. That is to say, it is unnecessary to explain to the youthful mind what these secret sins are and to go into details about them in order to induce him to avoid them. In general, the better course is to assume that these wicked matters need not necessarily enter into either his consciousness or his life, and to endeavor in all earnestness to have him occupied in doing better things. If we can keep youths and maidens upon a well-arranged program for all their necessary activities, and provide wholesome exercises for every single hour of their waking-day, we shall not need to worry about either their sins of commission or omission. And let us accept it as a rule that an ounce of effort expended in giving the young person a worthy thing to do is worth more than a pound of effort expended in an attempt to correct some error which he has already taken up.

In this connection let me note that the so-called sin of society has had a great deal of very unfortunate publicity. Public announcement of the white-slave traffic, for example, in all of its hideous details, has been unquestionably a means of arousing public sentiment and quickening the conscience of the people to the point of action. Much general good has resulted from all this. But the net results would have been far better had this publicity been kept entirely away from the attention of our young people. The detailed reporting of the sin and wickedness of the world tends to make them believe that such a thing is very common, and that those who pretend to be clean and decent in their personal lives are perhaps, to some degree, merely shamming. It is well for the adolescent boy or girl to view the conduct of the adult society with comparative innocence. If any disillusionment really is necessary, it should come at a time after his character is relatively matured and he is fixed in the larger and more fundamental life habits. Thus sin may be withstood.

**10. Teaching Social Hygiene** Some writers and speakers have been foolish enough to urge that the teacher in the public school and the Sunday school should give direct instruction in matters of sex. This can never be done, nor do we desire it. The necessity of attempting such a vain thing will be obviated in proportion as we follow a program of instruction intended to round out the whole life. We must teach young people to take every reasonable care

of their bodies; to observe regular habits of eating, drinking, sleeping, and taking physical exercise. We must teach every one of them to become master of some of the forms of plain, every-day industry, and inculcate in their minds a high regard for all those industrial classes which are performing the work necessary for the world's progress. We must especially see to it, as urged above, that the adolescent young people all are privileged to enjoy a reasonable amount of social intercourse, and that under wise and sympathetic chaperonage. We must teach them to respect their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, and to think of themselves as conservators of the race life.

Finally, we must teach these young people—the opposite sexes—to regard each other intelligently and favorably, so that each may know how to perform its part in supplementation of the other and as a contribution to the well-being of the whole society. Now, if we keep the young growing and developing in this ideal way, and if we add to it all the proper amount of religious instruction—as is meant to be implied throughout this entire text—then there will be little or no call for any such thing as direct sex instruction or a pointing out in any detailed manner the sins of society.

## XIV.

### YOUTH AND ITS APPETITES

A person who desires to understand the ordinary boy ranging in age from thirteen to sixteen, must give full recognition to the powerful appetites and inner cravings which are peculiar to his age. In his case, nature has very recently been at work building a body with accelerated activity, and also reconstructing some of the fundamental parts which constitute the grown man. It seems that the appetites for eating and drinking during this period are very intense. The physical processes within have probably depleted the stock of surplus energy and created a comparative demand for a new supply thereof. Youth requires abundant nourishment.

#### **1. Feeding His Hunger**

The Sunday-school teacher need not be shocked if certain fourteen-year-olds in the class seem to be more interested in eating a big meal than understanding the Scripture lesson. Moreover, it must be understood that, under proper conditions, these youths have a perfect right, not only to an unusual amount of wholesome food at the regular meal periods, but also to an occasional big extra meal, something in the nature of a banquet. It is remarkable how much they can eat and assimilate. Any one who is interested enough to observe the situation carefully will note that these youths

can sit down at ten o'clock in the evening and partake of a double meal, and, after a regular night's sleep, come up hungry for breakfast the next morning. Nature is certainly a strong friend and guardian of every normal youth.

As a step in the direction of winning their favor, and thus bringing them into line for willing attention to the Scriptural teachings, it is highly advisable that the Sunday-school instructor provide directly an occasion for satisfying the hungry appetites of his young pupils. Let him join them at an outdoor picnic, or an evening informal affair, where loud and boisterous, but innocent, hilarity may be engaged in, and where every youth is filled to the limit of his capacity with something which he delights to eat. The teacher who will take the time to perform this great service for the youth in his class will thereby win them solidly to his side in support of any good cause which he may decide to have them co-operate in.

Unless they are closely herded at home and suppressed, the boys of these rapidly growing years will have their "big fill" somewhere. I have been surprised at the large number who may be seen in lunchrooms and restaurants between the hours of eight and twelve in the evening. Not unfrequently these youths are going in groups of two or more, eating and drinking and making the rounds of the city. Much of their unrestrained conduct on these occasions is at best very questionable, and some of it is most certainly leading toward a weak or debauched personality.

**2. Save the  
Whole Boy**

It is hoped that the Sunday-school teacher will not be impatient with our indirect method.

Let us reiterate that the purpose of this text is not to show how to teach the Bible or religion to the Sunday-school pupils of any age. The main thesis of this volume is this: If the teacher will take the time to study and understand human nature, to know how character is formed through the medium of personal experience, to know the peculiar instincts and dispositions which characterize every epoch of growth, and to know the means and instruments necessary for the right guidance of life at each of these stages—then the direct religious instruction will be both easy and pleasurable.

In our endeavor to teach any subject to any age of young person, we must know, as far as is practicable, the whole range of his life. So it is urged that we can not successfully hold the youth in the Sunday-school class unless we recognize their natural cravings and appetites at this age, and do our part to supply the needed indulgences. And we have already made the point that to recognize the unusually keen appetite of the youth for food, and to provide at least an occasional full indulgence of this appetite, is to earn his goodwill and friendship, and make it more possible to win his soul for Christ.

One highly successful teacher of eleven adolescent boys in a Methodist Sunday school certainly understood the secret of doing successful work in his appointed place. On each Friday evening at



seven-thirty o'clock during the warm summer season, he and the boys came together for a watermelon feast. This luscious fruit of the vine was plentifully supplied, and every boy tried to eat more of it than the others. It was understood that they were to come in their ordinary working-clothes, for, after all were filled to satiety, they engaged in what they called a watermelon fight. When this mock-battle was finished, the fragments of rind remaining about this out-of-door feasting-place were almost too small to be gathered up. Every one was more or less bedraggled, but exceedingly happy.

Now, the significant thing about this whole affair was the close bond of friendship which existed between the pupils and their teacher. He was the head of a family, and about thirty-five years of age. He won over all the members of the class. They believed in his every word, and were willing to follow him to any reasonable length. Every one of the eleven was a most faithful member and attendant upon the Sunday-school lesson, and seemed to be most certainly on his way to a clean Christian life. So, through the assistance of a simple feast and a boisterous good time among the boys, as he called them, this wise leader was enabled to bring them close to the foot of the Cross. Verily, it was a thing altogether worth while!

### 3. A Burning Thirst

Quite as strong as the appetite of youth for many rich things to eat, is his thirst for a variety of drinks. It seems not necessarily the

rule that a son inherits directly a drunken father's appetite for alcohol. The real truth of the matter is this: every normal, well-built youth of thirteen to fifteen years of age experiences a most keen thirst for almost any kind of drink which may be within his reach. Probably as simple a thing as a glass of lemonade is ten times as satisfying to him as it is to one a dozen years his senior. We who have the well-being of the boys at heart can not afford to overlook this situation regarding his desire for something to drink; and we can handle it best, most probably, not by attempting to suppress it wholly, but by giving it indulgence occasionally in ways that are innocent.

There are various so-called soft drinks which probably contain habit-forming agencies. If so, these should be avoided in the service which we are advocating here. But there are other satisfying drinks which are probably as wholesome as pure water, and such may be selected for the purpose in hand. Consult your health authorities.

#### 4. The Law of Habit

In whatever means we may be dealing with youth, it is necessary to recognize most carefully the laws involved in habit and its formation. In the discussion about eating it was implied that the youth should follow the habit of eating his meals regularly three times per day, and occasionally vary from this habit and enjoy a full indulgence of something not intrinsically hurtful. Now, the same method needs to be applied to his drinking. In so far as we can control the matter, the

youth should not even be permitted to drink tea or coffee at his meals. Pure water is the best for him on this occasion. He should not be allowed to touch alcoholic beverages on any occasion, but at a feast or a banquet he may indulge in innocent drinks in the same proportion as he does the food. Such beverages as lemonade, phosphate, ginger ale and punch are probably allowable for this occasion, and the youth should be invited to imbibe all that he can hold.

Good men are falling out of the ranks all around us, wasted and depleted lives whose youthful years were not properly safeguarded and managed as to the matter of drink. They were allowed to run about the streets at night in company with dissolute men, and to acquire an appetite for alcohol. For a time, in each case, it probably seemed so happy and innocent. Life was so young and buoyant. "A drink of beer occasionally will not hurt any one," was the oft-repeated saying. Not only many youths, but a large number of adult men, are foolish enough to accept this dangerous maxim. But the actual counting of the instances of a thousand dissipated and homeless men has shown that practically all of them started on their way to destruction over this very innocent-looking and inviting path of youth.

#### 5. The Teacher Should Know

It is the contention here that the Sunday-school teacher of adolescent boys should take time to make inquiry as to what every member of the class is drinking, both at home and abroad; and

especially if they live in a city or community where there are open saloons. It is true there are communities where alcohol is little in use. Take, for example, in practically the entire State of Kansas, where for a youth to touch any kind of alcoholic beverages amounts practically to a scandal. Such a thing is as much a matter of reproach and condemnation as a theft; and for that reason no young man who desires to remain in respectable standing among his fellows would think of taking a drink. But in some States there are saloon-ridden communities where drinking is so common that many well-meaning people, and even a large number of church people, have been taught from their childhood to believe in alcohol either as an actual necessity or a necessary evil. In certain parts of the country, where every hotel in the community is more or less a bad-smelling alcohol dispensary, I have heard, time and again, pious Christian men express surprise at the thought that a hotel could be successfully run without a bar.

But if the law of temperance becomes firmly established throughout this great country of ours, such will be not achieved merely by passing prohibitory laws and forcing grown men into obedience to them. There must also be a thoroughgoing system of training the youth in habits of abstinence and in sentiments of dislike and disgust for strong drink and all that goes with it. Raise up one generation of young men who have had this practice of abstinence thoroughly grounded into their lives and this habit of hatred of alcohol fixed, and

John Barleycorn will be forced to bid adieu to that people. Such happens to be the secret of the remarkable success of prohibition in Kansas, where this institution is practically as well established and almost as sacred a thing as the church itself.

**6. The Teacher  
Must Stand Firm**

The Sunday-school teacher of adolescent boys who is not willing to take a firm stand against all kinds of intoxicating drinks has already lost his case. In respect to this great race poison, he should not only stand firm, but he should be willing to fight for more ground. If any reference to alcohol comes up while he is in the presence of the members of his Sunday-school class, every one of them will attend eagerly for the least hint of his opinion regarding the matter. And if he has won them properly to his side, they will also be ready to take a stand with him and perhaps begin for themselves an aggressive campaign against any possible contamination from alcohol.

It will be understood, therefore, that our insistence upon allowing the boys an occasional indulgence in soft drinks is intended as a means of satisfying their intense thirst to the extent that they will be much less inclined to run off to the saloons and grogshops.

**7. Youth and the  
Cigarette**

But the greatest enemy touching the life of American youth to-day is the cigarette. Alcohol is not in its class. The fact that the great masses of men are now using tobacco, and the powerful example which they set, is a direct means of induc-

ing boys and youths to take up smoking. It happens that the author of these lines has for a score of years made a very extensive study of the cigarette evil among boys, and has sought far and wide for means to counteract the evil.

On account of the immense profits in the tobacco trade, and especially because of the fact that the boy who learns early to use nicotine will perhaps consume during his lifetime fully one hundred per cent. more than if he did not begin until adulthood—for these reasons and others, the great tobacco trust has carried on a most active campaign of advertising and general publicity favoring the use of the cigarette. Big magazines, which a few years ago would have been offended at the suggestion of their accepting cigarette advertisements, are now receiving thousands of dollars weekly for this very purpose. Money has done the business. As a result, our boys and youths are being drawn into this practice by the thousands, and there is being fastened upon the rising generation a habit which will require a century or more to eradicate. But there is to be a day of reckoning.

#### 8. The Cigarette and Religion

It may be said beyond question of a doubt that the great majority of those who take up cigarette smoking during boyhood and early youth will continue in substantially these lines of practice. They inhale the nicotine and thus take it deeply into their systems, tending to weaken the heart action, harden the arteries, and otherwise to deplete the organism. On an average, they will fall



from ten to twenty per cent. lower in their school grades than their non-smoking fellows, and will tend to look upon school at best as a preparation for the time when they will be ready to struggle for their share of the material goods of the world. They will also tend toward a cheap and coarse interpretation of the integrity of men and a sensual evaluation of the virtue of women, with an accompanying tendency toward some form of sexual perversion. Many of them will, also, never be capable of becoming fathers. But what is especially to the point here is this: It may be said beyond question that the boy or youth who acquires the cigarette habit and inhales the fumes will never have a religious life that is most substantial and perhaps worthy. It will be a milk-and-water affair at best. The religion of such a man, if he ever has any at all worth while, will probably consist merely of a nominal church membership and a regular payment of a church assessment, with a thought of its giving him some kind of material advantage.

Wherefore, we must see to it that the Sunday-school teacher of adolescent boys shall recognize the tremendous consequences of the cigarette in the future lives of his class members. If he can keep them all from the contaminations of this insidious evil, and teach them in addition only the very rudiments of the Scriptural lessons, he will thus achieve a tremendous advantage for every one of them. So I urge him to lay off his coat and fight this monstrous blight of nicotine as actively as he would the fire consuming his own home.



**9. The Sunday  
School and the  
Cigarette**

The entire Sunday school must fight the cigarette with all of the powers at its command.

We have arrived at the place where this battle can not at all be won by the efforts of the parents acting alone, or by the prayers and pleadings of the many helpless mothers. Thousands of these women are just now struggling pitifully to hold the affections of their youthful sons who are being lured away to a life of debauchery through the instrument of the cigarette. I have dealt personally with many of these distressing affairs.

So, it is urged that there be arranged for at least one occasion annually what may properly be called an anti-cigarette Sunday, just as there has been observed, for some time in the past, a temperance Sunday. On the occasion of the anti-cigarette Sunday, there should be at least one sermon against the nicotine evil, with the provision that all youths of the church community attend the service in a body and listen to it. There is a need of bringing out a specific body of facts to counteract the evil work of the tobacco trust. On this particular occasion, all teachers of adolescent boys should have well-prepared presentations—lessons intended to combat the encroachments of the cigarette. The boys themselves should be induced to take a strong stand against the evil, and probably to sign a pledge of abstinence; and every other reasonable thing should be done to make the boy smoker a very unpopular member of the local society.

**10. Tobacco and  
the Cigarette**

Many letters have come to the author and many additional verbal inquiries, all raising the question of policy in treatment of tobacco in general as related to the cigarette habit among boys. Not a few have asked how we are to discriminate between the boy user and the adult user. The author's policy, more or less strictly adhered to, has been to confine the fight to the boy and to allow the man to do his own thinking first, and if he does it, all right. Thousands of men who are tobacco users are contributing in every way to prevent boys from taking up an evil habit which they, for good and sufficient reasons, are not able to free themselves from. Perhaps the most significant feature of the whole nicotine habit is this; namely, the relative sensitiveness of the nerves and tissue of the boy smoker as compared with the man smoker. Nicotine introduced in the system before maturity is reached usually means a case of inhaling, of much physical injury, and of weakening of the mind and morals. It thus becomes a most potent factor in the shaping of character. But if introduced as a habit after full adulthood has been reached, there will probably be little or no inhaling, a lighter indulgence, and a lessened ill-effect upon the physical health, as well as the mind and morals. After character has been reasonably well set without this poison as a factor, it has much less force in shaping the conduct of the man. Moreover, there is a profound secret to be thought of in this connection. Perhaps ninety per cent. of those who do

not take up the use of tobacco before full manhood has been reached will never begin; while perhaps ninety per cent. of those who do form the habit in boyhood or youth will never be able to quit.

It is very encouraging to observe that many men who are strongly addicted to the use of tobacco, and who find it extremely difficult to quit—many such men are helping to keep tobacco away from boys and youths.

## XV.

### GIRLHOOD AND ITS ADVANTAGES

The age of adolescence is probably the least understood of all the periods of individual development. At this time the physical development has run far in advance of the mental development. The youth looks like a man and the girl looks like a woman, but they are both still very childish in their ability to interpret the more substantial facts of the world. Another peculiar and significant feature of this stage of growth must be noted; namely, that there has very recently developed within the young nature the instinct of adulthood, the undefined cravings and ardent desires of the man or the woman. But the youthful individual as yet has almost no background of experience with which to interpret this new outlook on life.

#### 1. Playing with Matches

Relatively, the youth who has very recently changed from a boy to a man is in the position of the infant which wishes to put its fingers into the fire or jump into some dangerous place. The child is without knowledge of what the danger means. The inner self-activity prompts him to reach forward, and the way ahead looks inviting to his uninformed mind.

So the youth recently launched by nature into what is to him a new and unknown world of social

interests is now somewhat in the position of the little child playing with fire. He desires to possess many things, to go into many places and to try out many new social activities, but he does not as yet understand the full consequences of these desired experiences. The adolescent girl is in the same class. There is a new twinkle in her eye, added alertness to her movement, a merry ring to her voice, and she is all a-quiver with interest and attention respecting the affairs of adolescent society.

The thirteen-year-old girl who is about to become, in every sense, a mature woman, is inclined to be a very whimsical creature. She is usually difficult to manage. There is grave danger that her Sunday-school teacher misjudge her and become very impatient with her triflings. But all who have anything to do with this girl should be patient, in thought of the fact that she is passing through a very natural epoch of maidenhood. Every such girl needs a patient and sympathetic manager to direct her ways; some one who will hold her firmly, but kindly, to a reasonable rule of discipline; some one who will tactfully argue her out of her many foolish proposals.

**2. Talking About the Boys**      The most interesting topic to the adolescent girl is the boy question. If given half an opportunity to do so, she will spend hours of time in cheap and silly gossip about the various youths of her acquaintance. Her chief delight is to go off somewhere and meet a chum of her own kind and character, so that they two may hold a delight-

ful hour together discussing their favorite topic. Now, it is the firm conviction of the author of this text that young girls must be patiently indulged in their soft and silly conversations. To deny them the opportunity is to invite morbid-mindedness, and also possibly a retarded growth of intellect. It would be far better actually to provide the occasion for two such girls to meet and talk over their enticing affairs, than to attempt to keep them from it. Only one thing must by all means be thought of, and that is to prevent the girl of this age from chumming with any vile or vulgar-minded girl or woman. The innocent, silly conversation will satisfy the demands of nature and slowly change into maturity of thought. But the coarse and unnamable expressions which poison characters introduce into the lives of adolescent young people is what tells most seriously upon the future.

### 3. Gossip and the Sunday School

Now, when we desire to be certain that the Sunday-school teacher of the adolescent girls fully appreciates their light-mindedness and is able to deal sympathetically with their frivolities, that she possesses a cheerful attitude toward the whole of their lives, then she will be in a position to lead them to the spiritual understanding. It will be her peculiar privilege and delight, therefore, to accompany the girls on some of their outings or picnics. She may have the good fortune to be able to provide an occasional informal party for them at her house. At this time, light talk will be the order of the hour. They will lead in the choice of the

topics, and she will join them and guide the conversation past the dangerous places. She will be pleased to take up their various boy friends, one by one, and discuss the qualities of character of these youths, pro and con. This happy occasion will present many opportunities for the quiet inculcation of some higher truth. To her mature way of thinking, the low and crude ethical standards of these young friends will be very marked, and she will be all the while consciously endeavoring to refine and rationalize their judgments.

For another reason, a racial one, the Sunday-school teacher will of course not lose sight of the fact that her young charges are all eagerly engaged in a study of the boy problem. This attitude of theirs is nature's way of bringing them slowly into a full knowledge of what constitutes worthy manhood and the substantial character of an ideal husband and an ideal wife.

#### 4. The Truth About Life

The adolescent girl instinctively desires to know the truth about the mysteries of life, and she will go to great extremes in order to obtain this knowledge. Now, the Sunday-school teacher may occasionally find an opportunity to impart somewhat directly the rudiments of the laws which govern properly the conduct of complete womanhood. There is no need of a great amount of directness in this matter. Much of her helpful instruction about the secrets of a normal masculine or feminine character will come as clear inference. It is always well to approach such matters slowly,



and from a substantial basis. If the teacher of adolescent girls wishes to become very confidential in her talk to them, she may, for one lesson, confine her remarks to the topic of personal health and hygiene. Regular habits of diet, sleep, exercise, bathing, and the avoidance of drugs, cosmetics and stimulants—all these matters may be shown to have relation to the poise and rhythm of the young feminine nature. Of course, she may remind them of their sacred duty to be prepared in time for a possible pure and devoted maternity. It will be her thought that the girl whose life is most clean and wholesome and buoyant within and without, will be the most free and natural in her religious life. On the other hand, if a girl member of the class seems to be indifferent or resentful as to the Sunday-school lesson, the teacher will seek a cause; first, in the environment of the girl, and, second, in some irregular condition of her inner life.

It will be most helpful to the work of the Sunday-school course if the teacher be privileged to have a private talk with each of her girl members. It should be made clear to the girl that the conversation is to be held strictly confidential. Under such a provision, the youthful member will be very much inclined to tell her inner story. Often a girl of this age has some strange and startling things to say to her confidential adviser, and not until after her mind has been unburdened of these things can the counselor expect to do very much by way of improving and redirecting her course. What a significant thing it would be for society every-

where if every young boy or girl of the adolescent age could have a confidential adviser, before whom the disturbing and perplexing life problems might be laid in strictest confidence! But as matters are now, the great majority of the most interesting and significant stories pertaining to the secret experiences of youth are never told, and the valuable lessons which might grow out of them are forever lost. Every youth is instinctively heroic.

5. Shining  
Through Her  
Clothes

Little condemnation or fault-finding, but much approval and tolerance, will mark the character of the Sunday-school teacher whom we have in mind at this point. Youthful girls are especially fond of attractive things to wear. They are most alert in their attention to what the adornments of other people are, and they are conscious of every part and parcel of their own wearing apparel. Now, while it is almost a sinful thing to permit a pre-adolescent girl to acquire the habit of noticing her clothes or thinking about her personal appearance, it is quite the proper thing to indulge the adolescent girl in this very manner. Nature is speaking to her from within, and saying substantially this: My child, you are now blossoming out into a beautiful maiden. You are taking on the form of womanhood, and acquiring the character of maternity. Be bright and comely. Be attractive and buoyant. Bedeck yourself in brilliant colors. Make use of every reasonable means to attract attention unto yourself, especially to be regarded favorably by young men, for the

day is at hand when you must begin to think of a possible life companionship with some noble young man, and a possible motherhood of beautiful children.

Now, when we think of the growing maiden in relation to a beautiful unfoldment of her physical and maternal nature, and a normal rounding out of her womanly character, then we are in a position to advise and assist her in all ordinary things, and to teach her the true meaning of religious faith and practice. So, I say, let us be patient with the adolescent girl's desire for attractive clothes. Let us indulge her in this in every reasonable way, while we continue to help her work out a sane and wholesome interpretation of what her personal adornment should mean in relation to a good womanly character. Experience will teach her.

#### 6. Social Affairs

It is a difficult and serious matter for parents and teachers and other good friends of the young girl to assist her in her early social affairs. Just when should she go out alone in company? Whom should she associate with? And, especially, when may she be allowed to go out alone in the company of a young man? When the Sunday-school teacher attempts to think out reasonable answers to these questions, she must keep one matter very clearly in mind. It is this: Young women are much more limited in their choice of a lifemate than are young men. A long-standing social custom has decreed that they must not be aggressive in this matter. They also mature physically more rapidly than their brothers.

Such restrictions make the natural period of courtship of young women short. The curve of opportunity for a love match and the natural desire for marriage fall rapidly before thirty is reached. Now, since by far the biggest problem affecting the life of a girl is to secure a suitable life companion, it is urged that all who are interested in her life must be both thoughtful and reasonably tolerant regarding her early tendencies to appear attractive and to win the young men to her side. They may even assist her directly in her matrimonial aspirations.

### 7. The Physical

#### Appetites

Through the ebb and flow of the physical life in the young woman nature has provided a means of safety and poise. This monthly rhythm will take care of itself properly in case the ordinary laws of health and sanitation be observed. But, in order to insure its perfect balance and healthy tone, the growing girl should have a liberal amount of experience in mingling with the youth of her age, as advised above.

Like boys, the girls are also fond of good things to eat. Dainties and sweetmeats are especially to their liking, and they deserve a frequent indulgence in these things. The same rule which was advocated in respect to youth will apply here. The regular diet will simply be three full meals per day, and that without the use of such things as tea or coffee. But on frequent occasions there will be a "spread" of some sort, with its abundant supply of sweetmeats and non-habit-forming drinks. And this affair will, of course, be marked by the fullest possible

degree of innocent hilarity. After the occasional party out, with its late hours and overeating, the girl may come back slightly wan and dull-minded. But she will quickly recuperate, and she will certainly be saner and wiser for future events. But what we may especially get out of this sort of thing is her genuine goodwill and her willingness to co-operate with us in every good purpose which is set up as an ideal for her life.

#### **8. Dancing and Card-playing**

Presumably, nearly every church and Sunday school has to deal with the problem of dancing.

This form of exercise is as natural for children and young people as romping and playing. It is very unfortunate that dancing should have been carried into such extremes. Plays and games, likewise, were corrupted some years ago. The game of baseball was a synonym for gambling, swearing and many varieties of vile conduct. But this sport has undergone a marked change, especially in the educational institutions. In the typical case, there is now an attempt to keep the rough and disreputable characters off the team, and to fill up the places with clean and praiseworthy young men. Many of the players on college teams are now good, clean characters, men who do creditable work in the Young Men's Christian Association, for example. I do not pretend to say whether or not dancing can ever be purified in the same way, but it ought to be. I do want this text to go on record as favoring what is called folk-dancing among children and young people; that is, the rhythmic movements in response

to music, and the swaying and swinging of the body in a manner that is symbolic of some historic or dramatic event. These folk-dances are usually performed by the sexes in separate groups, and they are nowise different in spirit or meaning from the swinging around a circle on the part of the kindergarten children and the teacher as they sing one of their happy, childish songs.

As to the social dance, we shall leave the Sunday-school teacher and the youths and maidens to fight that out among themselves; but not without the statement that the existing forms of dancing, those in the class of the so-called tango, and all those which are accompanied by sensual style of dress and posture, all these should be under heartiest condemnation of the church. They lead to ways which are corrupt and sinful, and they undermine the very foundations of the church. But the logical way to deal with these exercises is not merely to condemn them and try to drive them out of existence, but to substitute something better. Well-managed social occasions, such as were recommended in this and the preceding chapter, will tend to put the sensual dance out of existence. The Sunday school can do much to achieve this worthy purpose.

#### 9. Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls

We are not willing to pass by the discussion of the adolescent age without commending most heartily to all Sunday-school workers with adolescents the organizations known as the Boy Scouts and the Campfire Girls. Whenever properly managed, the Boy Scout organizations may be made to



perform a most helpful service in the life of youths. It is very properly made an adjunct of the Sunday school, for it needs something of an altruistic or a religious motive to keep it well balanced. All those interested in the scout work should obtain the official literature pertaining thereto, and attempt to live up to the requirements of the order. Before an organization is formed, however, some one must be secured who can assume the responsibility of scout master. Without a sympathetic leader, the organization is of little value and it may even become worse than useless.

The Campfire Girl organization is one of the most charming institutions ever originated for the service of the young. As thought out and perfected by Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Gulick, this society is suited to meet the natural desires and interests of adolescent girls and direct them into ways which are charming and beautiful. The method of the order seeks to find a romantic interest in the ordinary routine of work and recreation which properly belongs to the growing girl's life. The possible charm and beauty of helping about the home, and performing the routine duties of the household and the school, are here much emphasized. The Campfire Girl movement should be accepted by the church as an instrument of service ranking well up with that of the Sunday school. Indeed, it should be a part of the social work of every well-organized church society. The official hand-book of the order may be obtained by addressing the Campfire Girls, New York City.



## XVI.

### THE RELIGION OF YOUTH

All religious trainers of the young will realize that we have now arrived at a very important epoch of human development, and that on account of its peculiar significance for direct spiritual instruction. A wide and systematic inquiry into the nature of the period of human life which we call youth has revealed the fact that the instinctive interest of the individual here takes a sharp and radical turn in the direction of religion for its own sake.

**I. The Instincts Reviewed**      It will be well for us to recall here the outline of instinctive awakenings as discussed in the first few chapters of this text. There it was shown that during all the course of the growing individual life there is a marked tendency for one instinct to dominate all the others. We also urged that this most prominent trait gave the point of conduct for teaching and training. The instinctive dispositions common to all ordinary children and young people were named in the following order: play, industry, belligerency, sociability, religion, vocation, home, philanthropy. Now, if we may accept this series as a suitable one upon which to base our study of unfolding character, it will be seen that we have arrived at the one dealing instinctively with religion.

Under ideal conditions as to spiritual training, the child up to the age now under discussion has received not a little formal religious instruction. He has attended kindergarten, the class, and received the benefit of a spiritual interpretation of the baby activities pertaining to that department; he has passed on through the elementary grades, enjoying the natural life of boyhood; he has been benefited by close association with his Sunday-school instructor; he has been made acquainted with play and school work and childhood industry suitable for his years; and he has entered the age of adolescence, with its startling social interests and activities and its new opportunity for him to learn that every act of his life has some moral significance, as well as a purpose for his religious nature. During all this course, he has become somewhat familiar with the chapters of the Bible, has learned to admire many of the great Scriptural heroes, has caught a glimpse of the human and divine significance of Biblical history, and has memorized not a few of the beautiful verses of the Holy Word.

**2. Religion for Its Own Sake** As to the bringing of the young into the church membership, the time and occasion for that is treated only incidentally in this text, while we continue our purpose of an all-around inquiry into the nature of the various interests and epochs of the growing young. However, it may be shown beyond question of a doubt that at about the age of fifteen or sixteen the youth becomes profoundly stirred with religious interest, provided there be a

suitable occasion for his doing so. Counting by thousands the people who are now church-members or actively religious in their lives, it is found that the vast majority of them were converted at about the age named. Careful analysis of the situation shows that there is at least introduced here the new element of emotionalism. The youth, who a year or two previously awoke with such suddenness to a consciousness of the social world, and wondered at the action of the people around him, and questioned sharply their attentions to his own behavior—that same youth is now wondering even more deeply, not about a human personality, but about the divine personality. Who is God and what does he think of me? How are my actions regarded by this omniscient Being? What have been my sins of commission and omission? Finally, what must I do to be saved? It seems that in the ordinary case the youth who is stirred by the new religious emotion experiences a secret questioning of his own heart somewhat after the manner just named. How potential in new ideas is all this inner disturbance! After all, the great battles of life are not fought out on the open field. Under pressure of excitement or nicotine or drugs, ordinary men are known to go, in ranks of thousands, heroically to their death. But this inner secret fight within the breast of youth under conviction of his sins, this great conflict of the soul, how we might wish that every youth and every maiden could have the opportunity to fight it out unaided and alone for the time being. If at this peculiar moment of deep religious disturbance

a young man could go far out alone on the mountain-side and fast and pray and look into the depths of the sky and question the forces which shape the world in space and the same mysterious laws which hold his own life in a covenant—if every youth could have the rare privilege of wrestling alone for awhile with his Maker, and could come out of it with a clear vision of his religious duty and a solemn vow to live up to the light as fast as it comes to him, then, we should certainly have him well started on his way toward a life of true service and worship. Who will make out for youth a plan providing for a course in silent reflection?

### 3. The Personal Need

Now is the time for doing personal work with the youth. After the various members of the adolescent class have heard a stirring sermon, the discerning Sunday-school teacher will observe evidences of the conviction of sin or unworthiness on the part of the pupils. A personal conference is then much to be desired. Though strong and impulsive, the religious instinct is still blind and very uncertain of its way. A little taunting or ill advice may turn the youth aside from the path of righteousness. Some irreligious friend may sneer at him. Sometimes even a parent will chide him for his interest in the church. Sensitive and disturbed as he now naturally is, the negative influence may turn him sharply aside forever. So now is distinctively the time to persuade the youth to unite with the church and to make public avowal of his promise to live a new life.

But while church membership is important, it is likewise most necessary to follow the young member closely, and see that he has some worthy work to perform. A few months of well-planned direction will most probably give him both a fondness and a natural freedom in the religious activities of the young people. Faithful and regular attendance at the Sunday school will, of course, be urged upon him. Then, if conditions are favorable, he may soon be conducted into the young people's society of the church. However, this last step need not be hastened, for it appears that such organizations are usually most actively participated in by young people who have passed through adolescence. Moreover, there is some danger of overdoing the religious program in its application to youth. There are so many other essential interests to be kept up. The school course and the ordinary industry applicable to youth, as well as the appropriate social affairs, are all necessary parts of growth and development at this time. No one of these must be permitted to crowd the others out of the way.

#### 4. The Wandering Nature

As we have stated previously, the mind of youth wanders far away in advance of experience.

There is a characteristic restlessness and a wanderlust which has practically the strength of a burning desire. The story of the prodigal comes to our mind here, and it most certainly has a deep religious significance. For a youth to be thrown out in the world, away from home and friends and familiar scenes, is to set his mind to wandering as to the

worth of his own life in this great universe of mystery. Out of the deep and stirring reflection and the lonesome heartache of the prodigal, out of sighing and longing for the home land and loved ones, there is certain to come some deep and abiding religious conviction. Indeed, many a man was never certain that God would speak directly to his own soul until he experienced this deep sense of loneliness and longing appropriate to the prodigal. But out of the inner struggle there slowly comes to many persons a sweet peace and satisfaction of soul and a sense of a future security, under provision that the new vow of faith and trust be lived up to.

So it may be considered as helpful to provide carefully that the youth who is going through his stirring period of religious conviction shall take a journey of considerable distance away from the ties of home and kindred.

#### **5. A New Sense of Duty**

The spiritual guide of youth will be watchful for the appreciation of the beauty and poetry of life as it is naturally made manifest in the character of his pupils. Now is the time for a contemplation of the subtle influences of poetry and fine art. Now is the time to help the youthful sojourner perceive the beauty in the sunset sky, to appreciate the sublimity of the ocean wave, to hear the voice of Divinity in the peal of thunder and the rolling of the cataract. The poetical elements of the Scriptures should be selected for the Sunday-school lesson, and many of these beautiful lines should be

committed to memory. The teacher will do well to read aloud not a few of the great poetic dissertations of the Scriptures. Doubtless the youth has heard read many times such a passage as the eighth Psalm, but he should now be made to appreciate its grandeur of style and sublimity of thought.

**6. The Desire for Culture**

We are assured from many lines of evidence that at about the time of his deep religious conviction the youth is as never before keenly interested in everything that seems to promise culture and refinement. He is deeply desirous of appearing advantageously before his fellows. He is anxious to win their favors, and will sacrifice almost any reasonable amount of time and effort to achieve this purpose. He is deeply impressed with the necessity of appearing right in the eyes of the Lord, and the substance of the inner plea is, "Create within me a clean heart, O God."

The healthy youth or maiden is deeply in love with life, and with the world, and all that there is therein. Each of these is practically also certain to be either apparently or secretly in love with one of the opposite sex. Teachers everywhere must recognize this last named situation, and refuse to do it violence by treating it lightly. On the other hand, this disposition to be in love with an opposite mate is closely associated with that pure love which draws all men and women to the Source of all good. I am firm in my conviction that the love affairs of the young people and their religious problems should all be studied and solved in the same spirit of



patience and reverence, that without the one being properly provided for, the other is almost certain to fall by the wayside or to be a thing of ill proportion. Great is the mystery of godliness. Few are they who are privileged to mount, step by step, to the highest religious satisfaction.

### 7. Practical Bible Study

Young people will not study the Scriptures simply because somebody enjoins it upon them as a duty. This task must be made to have its appeal. Now, the natural method of this undertaking has been directly hinted at above. The teacher must proceed as would be the case with the well-informed public-school instructor; namely, to endeavor to acquaint the youthful mind with the better and more attractive part of the literature so as to effect an appreciation of what is called good literary taste.

Wherefore, it would be most advisable for the teacher to directly deviate from the course of study laid down in the Sunday-school literature, or to supplement this with a course of Bible readings intended to entice the youthful mind toward a permanent interest in the Scriptures. For this purpose, the romantic-poetical elements of the sacred literature will be selected. Young people do not catch the meaning of the beautiful in any form at a mere glance. The most intelligent of them will pass by a work of art, for example, whose sublimity speaks to the very soul of the trained student. They will listen almost sneeringly at a great musical perform-

ance which brings the most delectable emotions to those trained to understand this fine art.

Now, the only way to bring the ordinary young mind to an appreciation of the work of the artist is to go over the elements of this creation and others of its class, until the learner begins to understand both the laws and the symbolism of the art. The only way to bring him to an appreciation of the highest grade music is to cause him to attend to it many times, and to reinforce this attention with interpretations, until he slowly comes to respond from within to the harmony of the selections. Likewise, the only way whereby we may most certainly bring the young religious convert or the youthful Sunday-school class-member to an appreciation of the Scriptural literature is to bring carefully before his attention the beauty and sublimity thereof, and to explain to him in much detail how each separate line or text may be expected to speak its own peculiar message to the soul. And, once this purpose has been achieved, he is likely to remain forever after fond of the sacred text and to keep up something of a life habit of consulting its inspiring pages.



**PART FIVE**  
**The Parents' Divisions**



## XVII.

### THE ADULT CLASSES

One of the most significant developments of the modern Sunday school is the provision for a class of the parents, with the expressed purpose that they take up and study systematically the problems of childhood and youth. Incidentally, this work is interpreted in relation to all good Christian effort and to the assigned lessons in the course. Some of the churches of the country have already arranged definitely for this kind of work. Apparently, the idea is destined to spread widely and to take on permanent form. Heaven speed the day.

#### 1. Parents and Child Study

The hope of the nation is an informed and wisely directed parenthood. For many generations, we have been proceeding under the false belief that the instinct of motherhood constitutes a sufficiency of knowledge as to how to care for children. But recently there has been brought out ample evidence of the fact that many serious blunders have been committed by mothers who not only experienced the natural love for their little ones, but were prompted by worthy motives to do all possible for them. All the human instincts are blind at first and need the guidance of such specific information as has been gathered through the experiences of many.

But in the ordinary case of the natural mother possessing love and sympathy for her little ones, and with the addition of some well-selected literature on child life, you have the necessary equipment for very successful child training. There is now a nation-wide movement intended to bring parents of all classes into closer sympathy with the specific means of child training. Perhaps no more promising institution of this kind has been organized within the present century than the one which is called the Parent-teacher Association, and which has been ably advocated by the National Congress of Mothers and kindred societies. By means of a campaign of instruction and publicity, many thousands of new and active members have been added to the list of those who wish to obtain the child-service information. Practically all the States now have their own organizations, and these in turn are supported by a large number of local societies. Under ideal conditions, the Parent-teacher Association is an adjunct of the public school, and is co-operating with this older institution in the solution of the training problems of the young. Good work is being done in cases where a strict outline of effort is followed.

Likewise, numerous mothers' clubs, child-study societies and the like have sprung up throughout the length and breadth of the land. All these organizations amount to an indirect recognition of the fact that the public schools acting alone are no longer adequate to educate our children and train them for society. The people themselves must assist.



**2. Proceed Slowly**

In thought of the organization of a parents' division in the Sunday school, the officers are urged to proceed with care. Many of the child-study organizations referred to above have dwindled away after a short period of work, simply from lack of right management. Enthusiasm is a splendid motive power, but its energy is certain to be wasted unless there be some one of ability to direct it. So with many of these societies for child study; they have started out to live on enthusiasm, while the members have not taken the trouble to inquire as to well-tried means and devices necessary for their permanent existence.

The managers of the parents' Sunday-school class should resolve to do differently. They should inquire as widely as possible of those who are already successfully launched in this work and obtain assistance. The minister of the church, the local superintendent of schools, the National Congress of Mothers, and those in charge of the educational work of colleges and universities, may be appealed to for suggestions and help.

**3. Topics Carefully Chosen**

The first important step in the management of the parents' class is the selection of suitable topics for discussion. There is always a tendency on the part of the beginners in this field to offer for discussion subjects which are entirely too broad and general, and which need to be carefully divided and restated before they will render the best service to the society's work. For example, a certain

mothers' club had printed on the program for an afternoon meeting, as one of several topics, "Training Small Children." This statement is too loose and vague, as it implies scores of different and significant things. The class which spends the hour upon this subject is likely to arrive at no important conclusion and also to have just enough said on a dozen different implied sub-topics to spoil the discussion of these in the future.

So it is recommended that some educator who is accustomed to logical analysis and subdivision of the child problems be called into service in the making of the programs for the parents' class.

**4. Simple but Vital Selections** As a rule, the topics to be discussed by the parents' class should be selected with reference

to the needs and conditions of its various members. It is assumed that they are all directly concerned about children of their own. Very well; such a topic as "Getting the Children off to Sunday School" would be a very suitable one for them to take up. This home task is often performed under much stress and strain, and results in not a little demoralization of home affairs. In frequent instances the household is late to stir on Sunday morning. The smooth-going machinery of the week-day is all stopped. Things are done irregularly. A hurried glance at the clock shows that only a few moments are left in which to get the children started. There is much racing about the place in order to find their clothes and leaflets, and to wash and dress them for the occasion. Sometimes much ill-temper

is manifested and the little ones are scolded and shoved hurriedly out of the door in order to give them enough momentum to enable them to reach the classroom on time. So they come often to the Sunday school reflecting the hurry and worry and trouble of the home. This hurry and worry must be obviated before we can reasonably expect good results in the classroom. So we have selected at least one big topic for the parents' class. Other suggested topics of home life, and yet of prime importance, are the following:

Teaching the Little Child to Dress Himself.

Regular Meals for the Children.

How Much Sleep do Children Require?

May the Small Boy be Taught to Co-operate with the Housework?

How May Busy Parents Provide an Evening Hour at Home for the Children?

The Essentials of an Ideal Sleeping Apartment for the Young.

The Management of Children's Quarrels.

The Right Use of Candy and Other Sweetmeats in Child Training.

The Direction of the Neighborhood Play-center.

How to Provide Disciplinary Home Duties for the Younger City Boy.

Dressing the Little Girl for Health and Comfort.

The foregoing and numerous other topics of their kind and character are the most suitable for the discussions of the parents, wherever they may be assembled for child study.

**5. Real Sunday-school Work**

There may be some who will question the child study here advocated as legitimate Sunday-school work. Our reply will be substantially this: Almost anything may be considered proper Sunday-school work which directly assists parents to understand child life, and thus puts them in a more advantageous position for training the young in all good practices, and which makes it more practicable for them to lead their boys and girls successfully into the Sunday school and into active service of the church.

**6. The Study Programs**

If the parents' classes are to perform their work worthily, the programs for discussion should be supplied at least one week in advance, with the understanding that every member will come prepared to discuss one or more of the topics. And then, as a rule, it will be advisable to assign each of the topics to some particular person as leader, with the further purpose of a free-for-all discussion by the members of the class.

The teachers of the class will be expected to consult with the various members in the assignment of the program parts, while a somewhat even distribution of the duties should be undertaken. It is not fair to the more active members to allow them to monopolize the hour, or is it just to the more reticent members to permit them to sit back and do all the listening. Moreover, it will be found that many of the backward ones are really very capable, some of them perhaps being expert in their

knowledge and experience regarding certain important training problems. This situation should be carefully inquired into, and all available latent talent brought out during the course of the year's work. An active solicitor is most essential.

#### **7. The Child-welfare Literature**

Another fundamental matter in connection with the work of the parents' class in the Sunday school is that of making available for all the class members a considerable amount of authentic literature on child life. If the local library is fortunate enough to possess a number of these volumes, this matter is thereby very much simplified. But ordinarily, few books of the class named are to be found in the standard library, especially that in the smaller place. Therefore, it is recommended that the parents' class take early steps toward the provision of a child-welfare library of their own. One method of securing this has been favorably reported a number of times, and that is for each member of the class to agree to pay for one standard text and contribute this to the general free use of all members. It is understood that the volume will be owned and managed by the class, and not by the individual purchasers. One of the members may be appointed as caretaker of the books. She may keep them in her home, or at some more convenient place, and may become sufficiently acquainted with their contents as to be ready to recommend chapters and divisions to those who are preparing to take an active part in the class discussions as assigned to them.

In the selection of this small library, the management is urged to consult the best available expert authority. The American Institute of Child-life, of Philadelphia; the officers of local parent-teacher associations; the National Congress of Mothers, Washington, D. C.; the authorities of the State universities and colleges, and the local superintendent—these will all be thought of in this connection. The author of this text has himself brought out a volume entitled "Outlines of Child Study," which contains one hundred and twelve ready-made programs with topics and references, and which may be found servicable for the parents' class. Doubtless other texts of this same nature will soon be available.

#### 8. Sacredness of Childhood

As was urged above for consideration of the teacher preparing to do general Sunday-school work, it is now again recommended that the parents' class study be guided by extreme patience and sympathy for the nature of childhood as made manifest in all ordinary places and conditions. It is easy to condemn and to find fault. One may put in long hours noticing the weakness and ill-behavior of ordinary boys and girls. One may make a long list of these and thus tend to implant pessimism and discouragement in his own mind. Or, he may take only passing notice of the adverse conditions of childhood, with the purpose of offering something of a positive character to improve these conditions. It is a most commendable habit for Christian people to withhold all adverse criticism



and condemnation of this juvenile class of individuals, unless such aspersions be made as the first step in an effort to bring about improvement. Indeed, every constructive program of reform calls for a clear pointing out of something or other which demands correcting.

The parents who may be interested in the contents of this chapter are also admonished to acquire the habit of regarding the so-called ill deeds of growing children as the crude beginnings of a possible betterment. They are also urged to accept this unrefined conduct of the little ones as the point of contact in teaching, or as the opportunity which nature is holding out to some one who knows better how the little ones should behave and who is patient enough to train them in the better practices. "A little child shall lead them."

**9. Work for the  
Class**

It is advisable that the parents' class in the Sunday school undertake a small amount of significant outside work. In one instance, at least, a happy thought occurred to some one to have all take advantage of every opportunity to render a service to each of its individual members upon the occurrence of certain stated events. For example, in case a baby came to bless one of the number, the event was made an occasion of an appropriate act of some sort, such as the sending of a signed message of love and greeting; or the presentation of some simple remembrance, such as a bouquet of flowers. Another significant event noticed by them was the graduation from high school of the youth-



ful son or daughter of a member. Again a suitable and inexpensive remembrance was presented.

So the members of the parents' class, through the medium of their earnest endeavor to learn all that is best about the care and the keeping of the children, are united in a close bond of sympathy and fellowship. Such religion is worth while.

**10. The Higher  
Goal**

And so there grows out of this close association of kindred spirits a strong and helpful agency in the support of the church and its purposes, in the building up of the Sunday school, and in the drawing of the hearts and minds of the young people toward the things of the Spirit. It may be left to the members of this class, after consultation with the minister of the church and the superintendent of the Sunday school, as to how much effort they will put forth in order to bring their own growing boys and girls into active church membership. Suffice it to say here, that if they set their hearts upon this worthy purpose, they may be expected to achieve far more by virtue of the fact of their being a united band, and of their setting up standards of behavior for all alike, then if each of them should proceed in accordance with his own method and standard of parenthood. For, as previously stated in this text, it is comparatively easy for an entire group of parents to put on any reasonable program of purposes for their young people, while it is desperately hard for the individual parent acting alone to accomplish any such purpose in behalf of his own child. In other words, there is

thought of here the tremendous advantage of having the sentiment of all the young under treatment acting favorably toward the proposed program.

**11. Some Missionary Work** Perhaps one of the best forms of missionary work that may be undertaken by the parents' class in the Sunday school is to go out through the community and make personal appeals for other fathers and mothers to come in and join them. If they perform this service in the spirit of true Christian fellowship, they may not only thereby awaken and inspire many a dormant parental nature, but they may hope to reach the mind and heart of many children whose religious care and training are very poorly attended to. So may there come, through the instrumentality of the good parents who may band themselves into a class of Sunday-school students, the blessed experience of refining and spiritualizing their own personalities and the more blessed privilege of winning many souls for Christ.

## XVIII.

### THE YOUNG MAN'S POINT OF VIEW

There is no exact age which marks the beginning or ending of adolescence. This period is characterized more particularly by a point of view or a peculiar attitude of mind. It usually begins at about fourteen years of age, and continues something like three years. During adolescence the youth is not especially interested in his own distant future, or in the shaping of his life toward a permanent vocation. His chief concern is a social one. His fondest dreams are all related to the goings and comings of the young people of his acquaintance. His only serious perplexities are those of social propriety, his chief desire being a correct form of behavior in the presence of his fellows and appropriate adornment for his person. It is true that the youth expresses a deep yearning for going away from home, but even this desire to run away is found to be at least indirectly related to the deeper desire to get among the people, and to know them and be known by them.

#### 1. Young Manhood

The period of young manhood begins usually somewhere between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. This is the time when we say of the youth that "he has sobered down." The young individual has become fairly well acquainted with

ordinary social matters, and has fixed himself somewhat in a relation to society. The matters which chiefly distinguish him at this point of development are his serious interest in employment or business, or the establishing himself in a life-work. The author of this text has had the peculiar advantage of a private conference with hundreds of young men of the age under discussion, and has tried to get their viewpoint. This is the period of the college life, and one during which a great flood of new ideals comes before the attention of the student. He needs our help.

## 2. Making Himself Over

For the first time in the history of the individual, the young man now eagerly attends to every affair which would seem to promise an advantage to him in the formulation of a plan for his career. What shall I do with myself? What vocation shall I choose? What temporary work may I engage in that is remunerative? Where shall I establish my residence? Whom shall I seek for a lifemate? How shall I proceed to make a home? The foregoing inquiries now run freely and persistently through the mind. The young man is quite as anxious about his life career as he was a few years ago about going to the party and wearing the finest clothes of all in the group.

We are anxious to have the Sunday-school teacher who may be so fortunate as to attach himself to a class of young men of the age under discussion—we are anxious to have the teacher understand the distinguishing characteristics of nor-

mal young manhood, in order that the Sunday-school lessons may be made to render assistance in the interpretation of new and pressing life problems, and in a possible improvement of the religious nature of the individual.

### 3. Types of Personality

The close associate of young men will note a variety of interesting personalities, and that out of these personalities grow some distinct types of problems for the vocational adviser. First, there is the young man who either approximates the type of genius, or who at least has one talent which stands out prominently above all the others. To him, the choice of a life-work is a settled affair, and the advice given him may be directed toward a proper use of ways and means toward the highest possible achievement in his chosen line. There is considerable danger that the one-talent young man will be satisfied with a low aim. His early vision of a life-work is likely to be limited, and not to include those big dimensions of personality which imply all-around efficiency. In his eagerness to get on toward a chosen line of business, he does not yet fully realize the necessity of developing himself to the end that he may become a strong and masterful personality and be able to act effectively in many lines other than mere business.

Second, there is a very common type represented by the young man whose past experience and active preparation have all been in the line of one form of work, while he has recently begun to dream very fondly of another line for which he has had prac-

tically no preparation. This condition calls for more than vague inspirational talks. Simply to say to this young man, "You can be what you want to be if you will only try your best," is not an adequate treatment of his case. Careful analysis of the whole character is required here. Suppose a certain young man has been reared on the farm, and has had his preparation all in the country school and a village high school. Presumably, he possesses a strong, rugged physique, and is earnest in his purpose to make something of himself. He tells you that he wishes to become a newspaper correspondent and a special literary writer. But you find that his preparatory English has been much neglected. Often even the college Freshman enters with a very meager ability to write. He is sometimes not able to write well an ordinary social letter and phrase it in even fairly good English.

Nothing short of a large amount of special training, and that through a course intended for the purpose, will probably suffice to bring the young man in question to the desired point of excellence. The vocational adviser should make this matter clear to him, and save him much possible pain and disappointment. I have known scores of young men to commit the error of undertaking some type of life-work for which they were not fitted by nature and especially prepared by training.

Third, there is the versatile type of personality. Many bright and promising young men finish their college course, and do it all well enough, without being able to determine upon a life-work. In the

usual case of this sort, the young man has two or three talents or interests which lure him on, but he is unable to decide among them. He tries first one and then another, and possibly follows that trial with a third. During all this floundering, he keeps his mind actively at work among the various choices and never permits himself to become wholly absorbed in any one of them. I have known personally several instances of this versatile type of vocational interest, where something as simple as the tossing up of a coin seemed to be all that was necessary to assist in the right course. I have known a young man to possess three kinds of talents, each pointing in different directions, and back of these interests there was about the same amount of preparation and skill. The vocational adviser needs only to act positively, and see that the young man makes a choice at once, that he devotes his attention exclusively to this purpose, and that he do everything possible to forget the two rejected ones. Very soon he becomes most fond of his chosen life-work, and remains ever grateful to his adviser for having helped him to decide upon it. "No man can serve two masters."

Let us not lose the point at issue. It is this: In order to deal wisely and helpfully with the members of the class, and to assist them in the development of a strong, sympathetic personality, as well as to assist them on toward a sane religious life, the Sunday-school teacher of young men must know how to interpret intelligently the various dispositions and mental attitudes of his class members.



#### 4. The Place of Residence

Many promising young men become so fixed in a habit of residence that it is sometimes difficult to shake them from an unpromising environment, even in the interest of their own career. It is a sort of inertia which holds many a youth in a place where there is no inspiration and little assistance toward the building up of a creditable life purpose. In one community, ninety per cent. of the young men will go off to college. In another, not more than ten miles away, probably not one will make such a venture. What is the explanation? Why? Probably some teacher or leader in the public school or Sunday school furnished the inspiration for the first named community, whose sons went away to seek a higher education, while in the second no leader of such ability was present among them. So, the Sunday-school teacher of young men can do much by way of influencing them to break away from the old ties, to keep out of a dull routine of activity, and to launch their lives courageously toward some higher purpose.

Of course, there are many cases wherein young men may settle advantageously in the old place. Doubtless many may be assisted in doing so. But for the young man of this particular age, I believe in what might be called a divine unrest. To me, this strong, subtle force is the energy which pushes uninformed young manhood outward and upward toward a larger possible self, and imparts the vision which finally brings to pass the making of a strong character. But, in ordinary instances,

some one who has gone on ahead over the way must give the expert advice, must furnish both inspiration and guidance.

### 5. Finding a Life-mate

Not least among the important interests of the young man of college age is that of securing a suitable life companion. The Sunday-school teacher should most certainly take cognizance of this situation and indirectly contribute to the worthy purpose just named. Too many valuable men go through life single. Too many others make a mere guess and a bad venture out of their matrimony. It is not foreign to the interests of the well-planned Sunday-school lesson to bring in discussions which will tend to throw light upon this most important problem of marriage. Whenever the occasion arises, such matters as compatibility in man and wife, divorce, home management, the rearing of children, the responsibilities of fatherhood, and the parents' duty to the community, should be discussed frankly and freely—all this as a basis of practical Christian living.

### 6. Making a Home

Where the heart is, there the treasure will be also. The right-minded young man of the age under discussion will not only be interested in choosing a wife, but he will also experience deep concern about the making of a worthy home. Such matters may appropriately come up for discussion, and may be reached directly through the medium of the Scripture lesson. The best way for a young man to provide a Christian home and to plan for

its continuous support—this is a fundamental problem and one which is so often badly solved. The special point to make here is that of the necessity of beginning the new home in a humble fashion. Too many young married people feel called upon to make a very favorable impression upon their friends, and so they overstrain their purses in an endeavor to shine in their new home. Much later trouble and not a few divorce-court proceedings may be traced back to the tendency of young married people to furnish their new home beyond their means, and otherwise to live in financial excess.

Not a few young men are found to be laboring under the foolish belief that they must have a certain stated sum of money in order to settle down, or before it is fair even to ask a young woman to enter into a life partnership. A little inquiry will prove that a case like this is one in which the young man regards a wife as a mere leaner or consumer, or as a social butterfly. He needs to be taught that the young woman whom he chooses should have the privilege of beginning in a humble way with him and contributing her part toward the making of a finer home for the future. Many of the most successful marriages which take place in this country are life contracts entered into between two young people who have almost no capital save the resources of their clean and well-trained young personalities. And these, in the course of time, prove to have constituted a very substantial capital stock. Working capacity, earning capacity, saving capacity, and the capacity to make use of humble

things in the performance of a worthy purpose—these, together with a substantial course of education and training, are practically all a young couple may need with which to begin life together. All this is consistent with the spirit of true religion.

### 7. The Young Man's Religion

The religion of young manhood is a separate and distinct attitude of mind as compared with that of the other ages. The religion of youth is emotional and impulsive, and the one possessing it is very well satisfied with dogmatic statements as to how to be saved, and he is willing to accept the ready-made rule of some recognized authority as to what his daily religious practices should be.

But in the case of the young man of college age, there is a distinct tendency to skepticism, many to doubt, and even to infidelity. Logical reasons for one's religious belief are almost certain to be demanded here. You are asked for proofs and for scientific explanations. The Sunday-school teacher should not feel at all discouraged at this seeming lack of faith and fixedness in the religious nature of young men. Science recently acquired is especially a disturber of the religious peace of the college student. In the typical case, the newly acquired science seems so satisfying and so far-reaching in its implications. The ordinary student is inclined to feel that it will settle everything. He may be seen tossing his head back in a contemptuous way while he defines religion as a variety of superstition of the uneducated. But if matters go on naturally, the young man will pass safely through

this period of doubt and infidelity, and will slowly come back to a very satisfactory religion of faith and good works. His teacher should guide him sympathetically through the mazes of his unbelief.

**8. Religion as  
Service**

When life is fully matured, we do not ask logical proofs of the fact that we love our companions and relatives. We do not consult the rules of logic or the principles of science in order to prove that we owe a duty of alligiance to the home community, and a measure of patriotism to the state and the nation. These are now firm and fixed convictions in our minds, and we are inclined only to ask ourselves what we shall do in order to prove ourselves worthy contributors to the home and community and acceptable citizens of the state.

So with the religion of the mature mind. It proceeds no longer in thought of logical proofs and definitions, but seeks a reasonable outlet for its energies and activities. As the mind becomes fixed in its knowledge of ordinary affairs, and as the spirit finds its satisfactions in the higher relationships with men and the companionship of the Divine Personality, the ordinary good man seeks earnestly an opportunity to serve. So, again, we urge the Bible teacher of the young men's class to be most patient with his members, many of whom, if they are frank, will possibly admit their infidelity, and some of whom will take pleasure in shocking others not a little with their commendations of science and secret societies as substitutes for the church.

Time will do the best work here. And through its peculiar contributions the natural tendency of the young man will be toward a coming into possession of a new light and a new and devoted spiritual purpose for his life. Thus, in time—provided the young individual be kept actively engaged in his religious struggle and not allowed to become wholly absorbed with material affairs—thus, in time the church, the community and the commonwealth will receive their measure of service from the mature man; and God himself will come into his own in the form of a devoted and serious-minded worshiper.

## XIX.

### A YOUNG WOMAN'S OUTLOOK

There is normally a striking difference between the girl who is referred to as "Sweet sixteen" and her sister two or three years older. In the case of the latter, the period of giggling girlhood is entirely finished, and a much more sober and serious attitude of mind is the dominant characteristic. Indeed, the practice of sedate reflectiveness seems to take an unusually low dip between the ages of about eighteen and twenty. It is not uncommon for the young woman at this period to suffer considerably from despondency. If she reveals her inner thoughts to you, she is likely to speak of being "old." Probably the somewhat rapid change from the frivolous attitude of girlhood into the more serious one has brought on these serious reflections. We may be certain of one thing at least, that the young woman here under consideration is looking earnestly forward, and that she is necessarily lacking in those experiences which would give her full assurance as to the success of her future. This may be called the second period of restlessness in the life of the girl, the first one having occurred at the beginning of adolescence. In two or three years, after she has tried herself in a few of the more serious purposes of life, a larger degree of assurance will return to her.



### 1. A New Personality

Properly speaking, the personality of the young woman of the age considered here is somewhat supplementary to the normal young manhood discussed in Chapter XVIII. In each case, the most serious reflection is relative to the character of the opposite sex. The business, the future prospects, and the hoped-for attainments of the normal young man—all such matters as these constitute parts of his best secret reflections—are more or less colored by the thought of a future lifemate. So, with the normal young woman, her thoughts of a possible companion to share her joys and sorrows through life constitute much of the most serious part of her secret contemplations.

Now, in order to be assured of a successful young women's Bible class in the Sunday school, we must be certain that the teacher understands the normal conditions of young womanhood, and that she exercises a deep sympathy for the best purposes of all the members of her class. It will not be out of place here to re-emphasize one of the fundamental secrets of teaching in any type of school. It is this: We teach most successfully that subject in which the learner is most deeply interested and for which we ourselves have the fullest sympathy.

Suppose you ask yourself what is the deepest longing of your heart. What would you rather do or become? Now, suppose some teacher or adviser should come to you and assist you in every reasonable way in the realization of this most

earnest desire. What a happy relationship of teacher and learner that would be! Now, such is the form of relationship which we have in mind here, between the well-informed and sympathetic teacher and her Sunday-school class of serious-minded young women. Under ideal conditions, he is simply trying to apply the Scriptural texts or the spiritual truths deduced therefrom to the life purposes of the young woman. That being the case, every natural deep concern of theirs becomes an important topic for class discussion.

**2. The Duty of  
Comeliness**

It is not only an instinctive desire, but, considered in its proper social light, it is the duty, of every young woman to make herself as comely in personal appearance as is consistent with her means, and the sane, even balance of her character. If we would teach the young woman and help her in the most serious reorganization of her life, we must recognize this seemingly material interest. And as we directly make reference to the many personal factors of her life, we may take advantage of many an opportunity to criticize both vanity and neglect in dress.

In connection with the idea of appropriateness of the personal adornment, there may be considered the fine proprieties of conduct. Naturally these go together. Neither of them necessarily has any direct reference to the amount of expense involved, as both are consistent with the practice of strict economy and frugality. Overdress and vanity in the personal conduct are really types of sin. Such

conduct points directly to a weakness in the organization of the inner life. The person who dresses vainly, thinks vainly and disconnectedly. At some point or other there has been a decided break in the continuity of his past training and practice.

The teacher of the Sunday-school class will easily observe the eagerness of the young women to learn more about those rules of life which would help to perfect their characters. Unfortunately, many of their class grow to full adulthood without enjoying the benefit of a frank personal adviser, some one to point out sharply their faults and to show clearly the way to mend them. To observe the simple proprieties of dress and manner is a step toward decent Christian living.

### 3. The Thought of Domesticity

Strong and significant among the most enticing secret thoughts of the young woman is the idea of domesticity. The teacher will naturally take advantage of this instinctive attitude of mind and will make use of every occasion to interpret the Scriptural literature appropriately. The religious life of many women is either spoiled or crowded out permanently because of their lack of a sane attitude toward the things of the home. It will not be foreign to the best purpose of the Sunday-school lesson, therefore, if an entire period be taken up in a comparison of the Mary and Martha types of character, and in an endeavor to work out an ideal for the modern young woman.

The striking difference between certain types of women who attempt to preside over the household

is not a difference in the wealth and material equipment and advantage nearly so much as it is a difference in personality. In one sense, it is a question of whether the individual drives the work, or the work drives the individual. The common tramp follows the path of least resistance, and becomes a shiftless do-nothing. Not infrequently the homemaker is at the other extreme; she follows the path of the greatest resistance and the maximum of worry. Somewhere between these two extremes there is a happy means which implies the maximum amount of work done with the minimum amount of effort and turmoil.

#### 4. Poise and Serenity

All young women who are on their way to a possible home life, and who wish to shine in such a worthy place, should have the benefit of a course in spiritual poise and serenity. The fine art of letting go of one's work after she has done a sufficient amount of it, of refusing to allow the thousand-and-one hurried details to get into the nerves and make them tingle, of thinking habitually some well-chosen thought of serenity and sweet contentment—all this constitutes an achievement which will come to the normal young woman only as a result of practice. The Sunday-school teacher of the young women's class may well consider this matter and attempt to make out a course in serenity and poise and related to some of the beautiful and appropriate texts of the Scriptures.

Some time we shall find one of the greatest factors in all teaching to be that of assisting the

young in the acquisition of proper ideals. We are just beginning to get hints of the tremendous significance of the subconscious mind and of how the practice of right thinking, along with right doing, tends to impart to the nervous system a certain form of potential reaction which may come as a happy response at a time when it is most needed. Many of the women of the household, who are driven forward under pressure of the work and worry of the day, are merely reflecting the ill-balanced training which they received during girlhood and young womanhood. On the other hand, we may observe many women who are capable of performing a double amount of work and yet remain habitually serene and self-directing. This type of character, also, may be explained by means of a study of the biography of the individual.

#### 5. Earning and Saving

Thrift is a necessary part of every good religious character. But if we may reasonably expect a man or woman to be able in the management of his or her economic problems, we must see that he or she early receive an adequate amount of training to that end. The young women of the age considered here are very desirous of making their lives in every respect worth while. They have naturally discovered that the problem of appearing well in society and of the working out of their careers necessarily entails a heavy expense. So it is desirable that all of them be made acquainted with the practices of earning and saving on their own account. Many well-meaning parents are at

fault when they give a liberal allowance for their growing daughter, and thus train her in the habit of consuming and spending that which she in no way consciously earned.

Every girl should be taught to earn her own money, even though she may in time expect to inherit a fortune. Economic sense is necessary, not only for a good Christian character, but for the decent treatment of employees. The Scriptures contain many stories of prodigality and wastefulness, and of the arrogance associated with unearned wealth. Out of these Scriptural lessons there may naturally grow a discussion of the every-day economic affairs of women, and there may be drawn many concrete examples of the sin of wastefulness. A careful study of the court records of a large number of divorce trials will show that a misuse of money has been one of the agencies contributing to the disruption of the American home. How often a young couple has settled down together with the purpose of being happy and of making their lives ring true in every respect, only to have the union torn asunder and untold damage done to themselves and society, simply because one of the two seemed to have absolutely no sense about the value of a dollar! So, again it is urged that the Sunday-school teacher of young women will use every occasion to commend the practice of earning and saving and general frugality, both as a means of grace and of getting on well with the family affairs; and he will not hesitate to denounce the converse practices as types of sin and wicked-



ness. Business integrity is basic for Christian character in both men and women.

**6. The Young  
Woman and Busi-  
ness**

It is probably both natural and proper that the ordinary young man or young woman should enjoy a period of practice in one or more lines of temporary employment before entering into the permanent and more serious business of a lifetime. As a part of the spiritual development of the young woman, it is well to advise that she begin early to think seriously of engaging in some kind of work on her own account. If she is already engaged to a worthy young man, and feels reasonably certain of a satisfactory marriage, her period of business training may be devoted partly to something in the nature of service. Schoolteaching is, perhaps, the most valuable temporary occupation for young women. I do not agree with the modern demand of some educators that we thoroughly professionalize the work of schoolteaching. Because of their instinctive love for the little children, their interest in rendering a genuine service to some portion of humanity and their willingness to study the ways and means whereby this work may be performed, young women are ideal teachers of children. And, as a rule, those young women who have received a good college training, and who are still both hoping and expecting to consummate a successful marriage, are far better teachers of the young than the single women who have passed through a period of bitterness and remorse, and have finally resigned



themselves to the fate of a single life and school-teaching as a permanent profession. Some "professional" teachers are of this class.

Unfortunately, the work of housekeeping is still more or less in ill repute on account of the bad traditions which cling to it. But some day we shall discover that the work of helping and serving in the home will lend itself to a beautiful development of character of the natural young woman. I long to see the day when the household assistant will rank as high and receive the same favorable consideration as does the public-school teacher, and when this naturally high office shall be treated with all due respect and remunerated in accordance with its just demands.

In discussing the matter of a choice of either a temporary or a permanent vocation with the young women of his class, the Sunday-school teacher should remember the fundamental need of each one's seeking a type of work which will keep the heart relatively young and the affections warm. Young women should avoid merely mechanical pursuits, which usually tend to brutalize their characters. Much of the shop and factory work, where there are merely mechanical devices to operate or simple routine movements to execute throughout the entire working-day—many of these places are perpetrating an extreme cruelty upon the characters of the young women who occupy them, and are a direct menace to the race life at large. For example, when we learn to understand the full nature of womanhood, and when we all learn how

to acquire that delightful feeling of race patriotism which properly belongs to us, we shall regard it as a cruelty and well-nigh a crime to compel a young woman to sit in a factory all day and roll cigars. This business is almost as bad for a young woman as it is for her to engage in the mechanical part in the manufacture of shells to be used in the slaughter of men. Both tend toward race suicide. We are sorry that both of these occupations are to-day consuming the hearts of many beautiful young women.

#### 7. Training for Service

The natural woman is at her best when she is performing some type of service which is fully repaid, not only in the material means of existence, but in the love and heartfelt appreciation of those for whom she is doing the work. Social service is, therefore, very much to be commended as a type of occupation for young women. During very recent years the field of this work has been very much developed and differentiated, and it is all closely allied to the missionary effort and to the best work of the community itself. The Sunday-school teacher should make much of this issue. He should use every opportunity to bring in discussions of the various phases and aspects of social service. These classroom consultations may be the means of bringing not a few idle hands into the work. He should seek to make use of those indirect means, well known to the able teacher, which tend to make the young woman thoroughly dissatisfied with her life if she is spending her time in the idleness of mere social affairs.

**8. Types of Service**

There are many lines of worthy effort in the modern social world: many of the hungry to feed, many of the naked to clothe, and many of the sick to heal. It sometimes seems that God has seen fit to make our lives relatively imperfect and subject each in turn to some affliction, so that those who are well and sound may have the practice of ministering unto the needy. It will be indeed a commendable thing for the teacher and his class to connect with the Sunday school some kind of altruistic extension work. One such a class, for example, organized a small mission in the slum district of a great city, and there the members went in groups of two or three at a time and conducted a Sunday afternoon social center. The aim was not directly to teach religion, but a better religious life was the ultimate purpose. The humble people visited happened to be fond of music, so the first thing organized was a song service. Inexpensive leaflets containing the music and words were furnished to the attendants. A cheap organ was secured. One of the girls played while another led joyously the singing. At first, the humble visitors of the place stared in some wonder and confusion; then they fell into the rhythm of the music, and began to hum its tunes and lisp its words. After a period of about three months' continuous effort, this place began to be a center of so much delight and interest that, at the time of the arrival of the leader, the members of the group were all in their places; and they continued to bring more and more of their numbers.

Now, the work of the little mission began to be differentiated. The singing was continued as before, but in after-meetings some of the more material problems of the neighborhood were taken up. One member of the Sunday-school class developed rapidly into a personal adviser of the people, and she was instrumental in settling not a few of their quarrels and material differences. Another member of the class taught the mothers how to wash and clean up their little ones who were brought there, while still another gave some very simple lessons in sewing and in the management of the clothing of women and children. So the good work went on, and out of it there grew a more abundant life and a finer spiritual character for all those who rendered the service. And those who received the direct benefits of the work were pleased in many ways, as can be easily imagined.

#### **9. Religion and Life**

Every well-balanced young woman is naturally interested in religion. She inclines to receive her instruction in this subject with less logic and doubt than her brother, and is more willing to accept the spiritual doctrines as they are presented by her pastor and Sunday-school teacher. The responsibility of the latter, relative to the religious character of his class members, is very great.

There will be little difficulty in regard to the religious convictions and the church membership of the members of the class. These matters will tend to adjust themselves. But they do not necessarily mean all that they are worth until the

individuals have been shown through many definite examples how to apply religion to their life-work. Here, indeed, is the test of actual character. However, this is little to be commended here, other than what has already been offered. The teacher may well consider what are to be the future life practices of his various members, and he may then proceed to offer such religious advice and direction as will tend to develop a healthy attitude of mind toward this plain work of the world. The practice of poise and serenity as urged above, the memorizing of suitable texts from the Holy Word, the frequent exercise of the altruistic motive, and the habit of coming into communion with the spirit of the heavenly Father—these matters may well be included among the purposes of the Sunday-school teacher, as he earnestly seeks to round out and perfect the characters of the members of his class.

## XX.

### THE MEN AND WOMEN

It puts one on his mettle to attempt to teach a class of thinking men and women in the Sunday school, for here we have a group of people who are likely to be highly individualized. While all of these may be presumably members of the same church, it will be found that each is headed his own way in an endeavor to work out independence of thought and purpose as to religion and the work within the church body. Since we have provided for separate instruction of the unmarried young men and young women, it is reasonable to assume that we have now to deal with a class of men and women of set habits of life. The very fact that they attend the Sunday school is a guarantee of their interest in the discussions. Perhaps an appropriate title for such a body would be the "Class in Religious Philosophy."

#### 1. Who Will Lead?

There will be frequent occasions when the leadership of the men's and women's Bible class will not be determined by mere nominal appointment. As a matter of fact, the members will teach one another, while the so-called teacher will act more in the capacity of a moderator. Necessarily, there will be many and frequent discussions and not a few earnest debates, for the members of the class

never will be in complete agreement as to the ordinances of the church and the interpretations of the Scriptures. Some will represent higher criticism and some lower; some will stand for verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and some for a very different type of divine guidance of the writers thereof. The beautiful thing about it all, if matters go on properly, will be the hearty disagreement of all the members, and the willingness of each to hear the expositions of all the others. But, while there is a lack of unanimity as regards minor affairs, presumably there is a singleness of purpose which will serve as the basis of all the work and the good fellowship of the class.

**2. The General  
Aim**

The members of the men's and women's class should understand their purpose as coming together for a frank and free study of the holy Word, with the further purpose of its best possible interpretation and of the application of its meanings to their daily lives. This ideal will furnish the bond of fellowship. It will be tacitly understood that none will receive offense at any radical position which may be taken by any of the members. The various men and women of the class will even feel free to express themselves more frankly than they would in the hearing of young people or newly converted church-members.

After a year's regular meeting together as Bible students, a dozen men and women will find themselves segregated into two or more camps of spiritual philosophy. These will probably be the



radicals and conservatives, and in a generous and good-natured way they will strongly oppose each other. Now, here is suggested a task for the teacher as class manager. It is that of directly restating the positions upon which the opposing groups agree, and that of recasting the high purpose which may be made to animate them and keep them in a close union of goodwill. One by-product of all this classroom effort should be that of spiritual tolerance on the part of the members—tolerance for every form of religion which is participated in earnestly by intelligent and high-minded people; tolerance for the prejudice which naturally springs out of every peculiar life experience.

### 3. Topics for Discussion

The members of the men's and women's Bible class will never lack for subject-matter for their discussions and conferences. Political and social events, economic and legislative problems, ethical and spiritual interpretations, will all in turn occupy their attention. Of course, each lesson may be prescribed from the Scriptures, and depended upon to furnish the general guidance for the conferences. But practically every class discussion will tend toward a consideration of one or more of the big human problems of the day.

In addition to their faithful reading of the Scripture lesson, the members of the adult class will do well to keep themselves thoroughly informed as to current events. They will naturally wish to consult regularly the standard magazines and to have access to a good working library. It will

also be fortunate for them if there be available something in the nature of a Bible commentary.

**4. War and Religion** During the time of the writing of this text, there is in progress in Europe the most destructive war of all known history. Now, the whole question of the meaning of war and its relations to religion is up for a new answer. One of the best means of acquiring a sane interpretation of this terrible affair would be for all thinking men and women to come together in groups or classes, and earnestly and prayerfully study out its best possible explanation. It seems at times that the great mass of the people are so busy acquiring the means of a subsistence that they never have time to live and think. Much less do they develop for themselves a method of independent thought and an original interpretation of the great human affairs. Now, here is an occasion upon which we men and women must think, for the world seems to have gone mad with a thirst for blood-letting. If the reader will consult the first chapter of this text, he may secure for what it is worth the author's opinion as to how we should proceed to solve the problems of war. Suffice it to say here, by way of repetition, that warfare is the natural result of a wrong philosophy of human existence. Erroneous ideas as to what man is and as to his highest possible achievement have brought this terrible thing to pass, and only a new set of ideas can put it out of existence. Woe unto this nation if we ever decide to require military service of our growing youths!

**5. Political Questions**

The members of the adult Sunday-school class should not dodge political issues. One of the things which adversely affect the political situation is the lack of a well-matured political opinion on the part of the average citizen. It is the duty of every worthy church-member to keep in touch with the affairs of the State and nation, and to take an active part in the right conduct of the big business of the country. I regard it as a matter of great promise that women of all classes are showing more and more a tendency to study current events, and to try to assist in the good work of governing the State. Properly speaking, a State is governed, not by its appointed officers, but by the sentiment of all the thinking thereof. Careful investigation of the States now according the franchise to women will show beyond question a general tendency toward betterment. The possibility of the ballot has touched a new or unused interest in the lives of many women, and prompted them to make for the first time an intelligent study of political affairs. Thus they reach a position whereby they may contribute helpfully to the solution of many problems affecting their own individual lives, such as the work of the home and the very pressing task of child training. So the author of this text is glad to advise a class leader of the men and women to use every opportunity to turn the Scriptural lesson into an earnest discussion of the affairs of the home, the community, the State and the nation.

## 6. The Social Whirl

If we are to improve the conditions of society, we must all turn our attention to a careful study thereof, and to a possible plan of betterment. There is a tendency all the while for purely social affairs to deteriorate into some form of excess. Those who have an overamount of leisure at their disposal are especially prone to engage in social practices which are more or less offensive to the more sober and sedate, and which are very detrimental to a sane religious life. And then, there is constantly emerging to public view some form of sinful and sensuous practice which has its origin among the baser and more brutal elements of society. The men and women of the Sunday-school class should not hesitate to go into these matters frankly and earnestly. For example, publicity has done much to defeat the so-called white-slave traffic. Too many church-members are innocent of the base affairs which are often perpetrated within their home precincts in the cities. It is not unwillingness of the people to prosecute wrongdoers and to put matters right in general which constitutes the problem of reform; it is downright ignorance regarding the facts and a resulting indifference as to what ought to be done. If every Sunday school in the land could have a large class of men and women who would band together weekly for a discussion of the affairs of social progress, there would soon be a general clean-up throughout the country. It will be found that the same old sins as were rampant in Biblical days are still

being practiced in more or less disguised forms. But there is less excuse for such practice to-day than there was in olden times. We are now in possession of sufficient facts to guide us in a careful study of these matters. Those who wish to do so may learn much in detail about the ways of the modern criminal. They may learn just how he practices his trade; and especially they may, and should, determine the nature of the environment which produced him.

Now, one of the most valuable forms of social work which all classes of religious people may do is to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the causes which contribute to juvenile delinquencies, and to follow such information with an effort to eradicate the causes. This is constructive Christianity. It will help to save the world.

#### 7. Social-religious Work

If the members of the men's and women's class in the Sunday school wish to do some helpful extension work, let them join hands with like-minded men and women of other schools and other societies in an endeavor to furnish all needed moral and spiritual safeguards for the children and young people of their place. Our excuse for suggesting this in connection with Bible study and Sunday-school work is this: The community which rightly safeguards and directs all of its young, especially in regard to clean morals and wholesome sentiment—that community thereby prepares the way for an increase of the church membership of the future, and in the number of those who

will work actively for the spiritual welfare. I sometimes doubt whether or not there is any religion which is at all strictly pure and unrelated to ordinary life and to the every-day conduct of the people. At any rate, we may be certain that a religion of deeds is far more effective than a religion of words. But probably a certain amount of each of these elements should enter into the case.

**8. The Sunday  
School and  
Society**

Apparently, we are tending toward a country-wide reorganization of the Sunday school, on a basis similar to that of the public schools. It is beginning to look feasible to employ a superintendent of Sunday schools for an entire city or community. In that case, there will be a tendency to test the Sunday school for its social efficiency, as well as for its spiritual results. We should all do our part to hasten the day when the Sunday schools shall have a general community organization, and when each division thereof will be expected to contribute a definite part toward the social, as well as the spiritual, uplift. The Bible class should take fully into consideration this significant problem, and make out a case the best they can. This work on their part will inspire others to attempt a similar thing. Thus, the good work will develop into a system.

**9. Working for  
the Sunday  
School**

This class of adult minds, these philosophic students of religion and other affairs, should be considered as co-ordinate with a minister of the church in giving advice to the

superintendent as to the best policies for the Sunday school. They will naturally have more of an opportunity than the busy parent members of the school, and more ability than the younger members, to make out a plan for the general progress of the instruction. They are especially in a position to determine the value of all proposed new social and spiritual policies that may come before the management, and they are advised to attempt to interpret all problems in terms of current affairs and present-day needs.

Too often the middle-aged Bible students are accused of old-fogyism. But this is not necessarily the situation with them. If they continue to watch closely the progress of human affairs, and to discuss freely among themselves the big events which are constantly shaping human destiny, there is no reason why their attitude toward new policies should be characterized by anything more reactionary than a safe conservatism. And, after they have studied and labored together, for a year or so at the most, this earnest body of workers in God's vineyard should be recognized by all around them as a very positive agency for public good, and especially for the spiritual life of the community.

THE END.









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